

# LITERARY-STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS – An Overview with Examples

In this document I present several ways of preparing a “literary structural” type of text analysis, with a particular view towards then translating a specific biblical text—or evaluating various translations of it. The number of “steps” in my proposed methodology will be seen to vary—why is that? It is simply to suggest that there is no single “correct” way of carrying out such a study of Scripture; rather, one should explore different approaches with the aim of finding a procedure that s/he is comfortable with and achieves the desired results. *Practice makes perfect!*<sup>1</sup>

## 1.0 General guidelines for a literary-structural analysis

In this section, I will present a step-by-step methodology for preparing a text-oriented, literary-structural (L-S) analysis of a biblical pericope in preparation for translation. Certainly, many other helpful methods are available, some of which may be found in the literature listed in the footnotes. The purpose of presenting these techniques is to enable translators and their instructors or advisers to compare them with their own analytical procedures (or any others available) and apply them, in greater or lesser degree, with modifications as preferred, to any type of biblical text, whether poetic or prosaic in nature.<sup>2</sup>

The twelve techniques listed below are especially helpful when dealing with a *nonnarrative* text (e.g., poetic, prophetic, epistolary discourse). These steps are intended to be applied to complete textual units, whether an entire biblical book or a clearly defined portion of one. Although the same steps could easily be adapted for use with narrative discourse, the nonnarrative focus here is adopted because it is not as frequently discussed as a specific method of analysis in preparation for translation, especially as this relates to the prophetic and epistolary writings.

### 1.1 Step 1: Study the complete textual, intertextual, and extratextual context

By *context* is meant all information that affects the interpretation of a given passage or pericope in terms of form, content, or any other related information. The pertinent passages and/or complete pericopes that come immediately before and after the passage in focus are the *textual* context (or “co-text”). These can generally be determined by comparing the textual arrangement of several standard versions, especially those that pay more attention to the larger features of organization (e.g., TEV, CEV, NIV). Look for similarities—or significant contrasts—in content and discourse type between the passage under study and its textual context in terms of specific

---

<sup>1</sup> Or as they say in Chichewa: *Kanthu kamadza ndi kuyesa* – “A small thing comes about by trying”.

<sup>2</sup> These notes combine materials from several other publications. For a specific application of these guidelines to the Psalms, see Wendland 2002a:204-209, 2011:ch.3, 2013:ch.9. My procedure may also be compared with Davis’s recommendations (1999:55–60) for analyzing literary structure according to the principles of “oral biblical criticism.” Note that my proposal does not include a proposition (“kernel-sentence”) or semantic-structure level of analysis. While such a method may usefully supplement an L-R approach, it is not essential to it. The same applies to various aspects of “discourse analysis” as outlined by Dooley and Levinsohn—the charting of text constituents, thematic groupings, and patterns of participant reference, for example (2001:44-47, 128-134)—or to a text’s nominal and verbal systems, interclausal relations, information types and their sequence, and highlighting devices (e.g., substitution, stress placement, left/right dislocation, addition or deletion (Wiesemann n.d., *passim*).

wording or general content. If there are any, does this shed light upon the interpretation of the passage as a whole or even a key term within it?<sup>3</sup>

A careful study of the total context often helps to reveal the various types of *implicit* meaning in the biblical text. Any semantically or pragmatically crucial content (necessary for a correct understanding of the discourse) that is *directly* implied may, depending on the project *Skopos*, need to be expressed *explicitly* in a translation in order to achieve a functional equivalence with respect to certain desired aspects of the intended message.<sup>4</sup> This would include information of a structural, connotative, artistic, or rhetorical nature, as has been shown in the preceding chapters.

Assuming for the moment (to be checked again in the next step) that the pericope being studied is clearly demarcated with respect to its outer borders, one must determine the larger discourse unit of which it is a part (unless it happens to constitute a complete book or a principal section on its own). It may help to compare the standard versions, looking for a major section heading or paragraph break on either side of the focal section and observing the flow of thoughts, feelings, and intentions across these larger compositional boundaries. What governs or characterizes the movement of one text segment to and from another, and how do the adjacent units seem to be related to each other in terms of form, content, and purpose? What then appears to give the section under consideration its discrete unity?

Next, the *wider* textual context of the focal pericope must be investigated: Carefully investigate all cross-references to related passages in an annotated Bible, a study edition, or some similar reference work. Most of these citations will turn out to be only loosely connected with the section at hand, but it is usually worth the effort to carry out this exercise in any case. Are there any passages found elsewhere in the Bible that are noticeably similar to the one being analyzed, especially in their use of key theological or technical terms and expressions? Scripture is its own best interpreter, and therefore major correspondences of form, content, or function in other texts can help us to understand a difficult passage. Is it possible that another text (e.g., in the Old Testament) may have influenced the section under study in some way? If so, how? In this process of *intertextual* comparison it is important to pay attention to significant differences as well as similarities between the two passages and what they mean for interpretation.

Finally, there are reference works (commentaries, study Bibles, Bible dictionaries or encyclopedias, and other specialized helps) that are helpful in connection with the *extratextual* context or conceptual background of the pericope being studied.<sup>5</sup> These resources can shed light

---

<sup>3</sup> Use of “you” in these guidelines (implied also in the imperative forms) may be taken as singular or plural—that is, directed either to an individual draft translator or to a team working on the text together.

<sup>4</sup> Ellis Deibler’s *Index of Implicit Information in Acts—Revelation* (1999) is a manual designed to assist translators in the difficult area of implicit versus explicit information. It includes a brief but helpful introduction to the subject as well as an appendix that summarizes the different types of implicit ⇔ explicit procedure often needed during Bible translation, for example: the author-reader communication situation information (“implicatures”), author-reader information (“assumed information”), TL requirements (“explication”), plus various types of semantic management with regard to deictic reference, ellipsis, event-based “arguments,” and other information associated with “events,” figures of speech, and argument structure. While the operation of implicit = > explicit tends to be more common, it may also be necessary for certain material that was explicit in the biblical text to be implicit in the TL, for example, redundant information that would make the translation sound unnatural or even obscure due to all the detail. This is especially true in poetic discourse, in which brevity of expression often produces greater impact.

<sup>5</sup> Secular translators and theorists too recognize the importance of reading the text to be translated and anything related to it, as well as the translation itself as it is being produced: “An essential preparation for the translation will be careful reading and re-reading and accompanying research of source text and other work by the author. ... [A]ny translation is ultimately the product of multiple reading and drafts which precede and determine the shape of the final draft delivered to the publishers. ... Repeated reading and research enable the translator to identify such [rhythmic, lexical, figurative, structural, symbolic] patterns [in a source text]” (Baker 1998:129).

on the situational setting: the total historical, political, ecological, economic, sociocultural, literary, philosophical, and religious environment of the time when the passage was most likely written—or on specific topics such as personal names, places, peoples, parties, geography, flora/fauna, customs, worldview, way-of-life, nonbiblical beliefs, and worship rites.<sup>6</sup> In recent years, the hermeneutical school of social-scientific criticism has contributed a great deal to this effort to reveal the overall environment in which the biblical books were composed, transmitted, and understood in relation to the postulated cultural perspective and practices of the originally intended audience (see, for example, Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992 and 1998; Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas 2000; Keener 1993).

The importance of this first step of a holistic process of literary interpretation—*conceptual contextualization*—cannot be overemphasized. Sadly, it is often ignored in the rush to get to the words of the text itself. But shortcuts only make for incomplete and inadequate exegeses.

### **1.2 Step 2: Read the entire text and determine its genre and subgenres**

A repeated reading of the text is vital to analysis. This is often taken for granted, but not often done. It is very important to do it *aloud* (even if one is alone!) and *in the original language*, if possible. Visualize a familiar setting and a typical audience sitting before you and for whom you are orally reciting the passage on a specific occasion. Do this several times for variety, with a different mood, perspective, or emphasis each time. *Listen* to the text. Allow it to stimulate the ears as well as the eyes. Certain prominent *oral-aural* stylistic and structural devices (especially those based upon sound) will become apparent through this attentive listening exercise.<sup>7</sup> This will give a general idea of what the portion is about and what type of a Scripture text it is. Make a tentative summary in a sentence or two of the main thoughts of the section as they occur as well as the main theme or themes. This may change after you have analyzed the pericope in more detail, but at least you will have a topical framework for your study as you continue to develop it in different ways.

It is important to specify the particular genre, or functional type, of text that you are dealing with, for this basic literary impression will guide you in further analysis of its form and content. Is it a prosaic or a poetic discourse, and what particular category or subtype of either one—for example, for *prose*: narrative, prophetic, epistolary, genealogical; and for *poetry*: lyric (lament, hymn), apocalyptic, hortatory, didactic? Where do instances of “type mixing” occur, and for what apparent purpose? On a more specific level, for example in the case of a prophetic discourse, should it be classified as an oracle of judgment, of salvation, of assurance, of admonition, of divine self-disclosure, of “woe,” or as a judicial speech or an apocalyptic-eschatological prediction (see Aune 1991, chaps. 4–5)? Within a Gospel narrative, does the text at hand appear to be a miracle story, a pronouncement passage, a biographical account, a parable, prophecy, disputation, or a homiletic midrash (see Aune 1987:50–54)?

The wider genre classification determines both the hermeneutical expectations that one brings to a text in terms of form, content, and function as well as the method of analysis and

---

<sup>6</sup> “The cultural context is ... a world vision that links together the members of a social group and distinguishes them from others. In other words, it is a set of cultural predispositions (conventions, beliefs, values and assumptions) internalized in the mind of the individual but socially determined. The interpretation of a text therefore becomes the product of a social (or inter-subjective) practice” (Megrab 1999:61).

<sup>7</sup> The important structural implications of ancient oral “typesetting” by means of transitional formulas, repetition, parallel patterning, etc. are set forth in detail in the works of Davis (1999) and Harvey (1998).

interpretation that is most appropriate for that particular type of discourse.<sup>8</sup> Once the nature of the whole has been thoroughly investigated by means of a study of its larger structural arrangement and communicative purpose, it will be easier to understand the individual verses—the constituent parts. Decisions as to genre and subgenre will affect how one treats the pericope in the process of translating it, especially if a corresponding genre or text type is not part of the TL oral inventory or literary corpus.

### ***1.3 Step 3: Plot all occurrences of recursion/repetition in the pericope***

A thorough analysis of the various types of verbal recursion present in a text is necessary, whether one's interest is primarily linguistic or literary. This is especially true in the case of the Scriptures due to the sheer abundance and variety of phonological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic reiteration—it is present in virtually every passage. Thus it is necessary to make a detailed examination of any kind of repetition that appears, whether of content or form.<sup>9</sup> To do this, first note the sameness of any feature within the section or distinct subsection, for example, a continuance of time, place, participants and props, action line, topic, or genre/subgenre. Then examine the actual words or phrases and their order, placement, or arrangement within the section. Is any particular idea, expression, or syntactic construction repeated, and is such repetition exact, synonymous, or contrastive in nature? If possible, it is best to do this using the original Hebrew or Greek text or an interlinear version, since that is the only way in which the same or similar sounds—as in alliteration, assonance, or punning—can be detected. If that is not possible, a literal translation like the English RSV or NASB will have to do.

After noting all the instances of lower-level repetition, search for any *patterns* of recursion that are developed in the larger discourse, whether local or global in size and scope. In a poetic text, identify the different types of *parallelism*. (Such parallelisms—coupled lines—may also occur in prose, especially in direct speech.) These parallel utterances may be found right next to each other (*adjacent*) or at some distance away (*separated*) as in *inclusio*, *exclusio*, *anaphora*, or *epiphora* (see definitions below). When the second member of a parallelism is distant from the first, the B line often appears at a strategic compositional point such as at a structural boundary or a thematic peak. Lexical recursion also contributes to the *cohesion* (referential connectivity) of the text as a whole as well as of the distinct portions (“spans”) that are included within it, creating, for example, participant chains, event sequences, temporal-spatial extensions, and topical threads. All deictic forms (pronouns, pro-verbs, demonstratives) are important in this regard, whether forward or backward directed (i.e., *cataphoric* or *anaphoric*), as is the significant continuity that is manifested by any other formal feature of the discourse (e.g., tense-aspect, mood-tone, person-number, speaker-addressee, text type).

Once the whole text has been examined with respect to all occurrences of exact, synonymous, contrastive, or associative (e.g., cause-effect) reiteration and it has been determined whether or not these are instances of random repetition or patterned recursion, observe how they all fit together to support the author's intended message. Can any explanation be given for the variations that appear? For example, are they due to a different co-text, one that is revealed by a shift in subject or style (see step 4 below)? It may be helpful as part of this general exercise to join any obvious or probable correspondences by means of arrows or to mark prominent parallels by underlining or highlighting them with felt markers of the same color. Then see if you can fit the similar instances and related thoughts together under a general topic such as blessing, punishment, righteousness, wickedness, good works, God's nature, promises, commands, and warnings.

---

<sup>8</sup> From a linguistic perspective, Wiesemann (n.d.:94–104) notes the importance of employing different analytical techniques for different types of discourse; for example, to narrative (procedural) she adds also “expository” and “behavioral” texts.

<sup>9</sup> I sometimes distinguish the reiteration of form and content on the microstructure of discourse (*repetition*) from that on the macrostructure (*recursion*). An analysis of the former gives one a picture of the latter.

Key concepts of this kind may be also written down as they occur individually or in combination on a separate piece of paper. Then after re-reading the text, you may decide to rearrange the listed categories, adding to them, or deleting, conjoining, separating, or renaming them. Perhaps it will turn out that a certain idea that is highlighted by repetition in the pericope under study has been important also in other portions of the larger document (or will turn out to be so later as the discourse is developed).

#### **1.4 Step 4: Find all instances of disjunction within the discourse**

In step 3 we saw how the various types of repetition effected textual *continuity* (i.e., cohesion and coherence) within a pericope. In contrast, the technique of disjunction highlights the obvious points of *discontinuity*, meaning some sort of a new beginning in discourse. These points are usually created at the beginning of larger compositional units, especially of paragraphs or their equivalents (in poetry, “strophes”). Disjunction is effected by a noticeable shift in the linguistic form (e.g., changing from past to present tense, from narrative report to direct speech, from third person to first person point of view) and/or content (e.g., moving from one scene, time setting, cast of characters, sequence of events, topical focus, or argument line to another).

Changes of this nature are sometimes seen combined with an appropriate *formula* that either opens or closes a distinct discourse unit to signal either “aperture” or “closure” respectively. Examples are “Then the word of the LORD came to me saying...”; “And it came to pass in those days...”; “The time is surely coming, says the LORD, when ...”; “So the land had rest X years”; “While he was saying this ...”; “Now concerning ...”; “Come now, you who say ...”; “Next I saw ...”; and “Praise the LORD!” A formula of this kind, which is especially common at the beginning of a section, often occurs in conjunction with the syntactic operations of *topicalization* (i.e., introducing a new topic into the discourse) and *focalization* (i.e., marking certain information as being of special salience within the clause/sentence). In oral texts, intonation and pause are normally utilized in this process, while in written texts the marker is often a full noun phrase + /– some form of dislocation in the word order (i.e., a “front shift” or “back shift” of the topical information).<sup>10</sup>

However, modifications in form, arrangement, content, tone, or perspective and the use of transitional expressions are not the only indicators of disjunction. These devices may be accompanied by a discourse marker of another kind, which increases the disjunctive effect. These other types include vocatives, imperatives, redundant demonstrative indicators, information concerning the interpersonal setting (e.g., Ezek. 14:1), and explicit references to time, place, or circumstance (e.g., in Ezek. 8:1, 7, and 9:1 “In the sixth year ...”; “And he brought me to ...”; “Then he cried in my hearing ...”). A more literary type of disjunction may be incorporated into the discourse by means of special forms that involve an overt or covert shift in expectancy, or some other variation from the conventional norm such as a change in some sequence of parallelism or a prevailing metrical pattern; an elliptical, inserted, interrupted, or broken syntactic construction (anacoluthon); a rhetorical, deliberative, or leading question; the use of hyperbole, irony, sarcasm, or an unusual figure of speech; and the use of a parenthesis, a dramatic antithesis, or a striking instance of paronomasia (punning).

#### **1.5 Step 5: Isolate the areas of stylistic concentration**

Another marker of disjunction besides those mentioned in section 4 is an unexpected or unusual concentration of literary devices. It is useful, however, to consider this feature as a separate step in L-R discourse analysis; this is because such a stylistic concentration, whether “pure” or “mixed” in character, may also serve to mark a peak point in the text, in addition to a compositional

---

<sup>10</sup> For some helpful comments on topic and focus in Hebrew narrative, see Heimerdinger 1999, *passim*. See Levinsohn 1992, chaps. 1 and 6, for a discussion of topic and focus in New Testament discourse.

boundary.<sup>11</sup> Examples of a *pure* concentration are a cluster of related figures, especially simile-metaphor, or a passage of extended imagery that functions to foreground a certain segment or subject within the pericope as a whole. A *mixed* concentration may be composed of any number of different features, for example, an initial rhetorical question encoded as direct speech that repeats some important element mentioned earlier in the text and includes a play on words, a hyperbole, or some other type of emphatic, idiomatic, or colorful language.

Poetry, being a form of discourse that is compact and condensed, is characterized by an extra measure of stylistic concentration. It is frequently marked (in Hebrew at any rate) by such features as rhythmic and balanced line-coupling, ellipsis (e.g., omission of the verb in the B line of a parallel couplet), conjunctive asyndeton, a reduction in the number of prose particles (definite article, sign of a direct object, prepositional prefixes, relative pronoun), predication through the use of nominalized verbals (gerunds or infinitives), and gnomic, proverbial, or conventional utterances of a religious nature. Conceptually concentrated passages appear in the Epistles on occasion in order to highlight a particular theological thought or communicative purpose (e.g., in 1 Tim. 3:16 to focus upon the saving mystery about Jesus Christ; in Heb. 4:12 to accent the power of his Word; in 1 John 2:12–14 to encourage the faithful; and in Jude 12–13 to warn readers of the grave danger of false teachers). In narrative discourse, we sometimes see a “crowded stage” (many participants) or a beehive of activity (many events in close succession) signaling the peak of the account (e.g., in Exod. 14:19–29 Israel’s crossing of the Red Sea in advance of the Egyptian army; in Isa. 66:15–24 the eschatological last judgment to close the book of prophecy; in Luke 23:44–49 the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; in Acts 27 the storm that almost ended Paul’s sea journey to Rome; and in Rev. 19:17–21 the final defeat of the Beast and his armies at the end of time).

After the presence of such a concentration of features has been identified and analyzed, its particular placement and purpose within the text must be contextually evaluated. Some examples of a carefully positioned concentration of stylistic devices can be seen in the following passages from Daniel: the doxology of Darius, which ends the narrative and begins the prophetic half of the book (6:26–27); Daniel’s intense prayer of confession and intercession (9:1–19), which divides the apocalyptic portion in two; and the awesome vision of a universal world tribulation followed by a resurrection and day of final judgment, which highlights the prophecy’s concluding portion (12:1–4).

### ***1.6 Step 6: Identify the major points of discourse demarcation and projection***

Based on the results of steps 1–5, the next, step 6 can now be carried out. The aim here is to provide an overview of the discourse organization of the pericope or book being analyzed. This is done first of all with regard to the text’s external and internal boundaries (its “demarcation”) and then any areas of additional emphasis (“projection”). The latter may be either major or minor points of importance (above or below the paragraph level) in relation to the development of message content and the realization of its primary pragmatic intent.

Obvious occurrences of separated recursion (see section 3) often indicate a structural break in the textual movement from one poetic paragraph (strophe or stanza) to another. In other words, they may signal a compositional border either within or at the extremities of the text. The more frequent the incidence of recursion and the greater its quality (degree of formal correspondence), the more diagnostic it is as an architectonic marker. Some of the most common discourse-framing techniques are *inclusio* (a parallel beginning and ending of a unit), *anaphora*

---

<sup>11</sup> Another purpose for a general stylistic analysis of a text to be translated may be summarized as follows: “[A] stylistic analysis can help the translator establish priorities in the decision-making process on the micro-level. Such an analysis is often carried out unconsciously or intuitively by experienced translators and sensitive readers” (Baker 1998:173). It is helpful, however, to make this an explicit step in the set of procedures that Bible translators regularly put into practice.

(parallel unit beginnings), *epiphora* (parallel unit endings), and *anadiplosis* (unit overlapping or transitional parallelism).

Sometimes separated recursion of form or content, instead of signaling a break, signals a place of special significance within the composition as a whole. In most cases this sort of projection occurs somewhere near the close of a pericope, though in poetry it may be sometimes be found near the textual midpoint. Separated recursion may signal a point of prominence or culmination in other genres as well, for example, in relation to either the central action of a narrative account (“climax”), the main theme of an exposition or exhortation (“peak”), or in the development of the author’s feelings and intensity of emotive expression (“apex”). However, lexical recursion on its own, unless it happens to be very exact and/or extensive, is not sufficient evidence to postulate a major discourse break or peak. Therefore, the case for a break or peak is strengthened if lexical recursion is found to occur in conjunction with a significant shift (see sec. 4) in time, place, speaker, or topic (+/- focus marking) and/or an unusual concentration of poetic features (e.g., figurative language, rhetorical question, direct speech, hyperbole). The more literary evidence that can be marshaled in support of a given structural hypothesis, the more credible it is and the easier it is to defend it in the face of alternatives.

Thus, with these signals in mind, the analyst should, as step 6, record all posited breaks and potential peaks in the original text. This could be done using different marking colors to indicate the points of closest semantic correspondence. Then the breaks and peaks can be related to one another in terms of their topical content and major or minor importance. This forms the basis for step 7.

### ***1.7 Step 7: Outline the compositional structure of the entire pericope***

After a thorough consideration of the structure-related information derived from step 6, the analyst will be able to discern the larger textual contours of the entire pericope, including all of its internal segments. The material now needs to be outlined and topicalized (given summary subject headings) according to the various form-content divisions, fitting them together into a hierarchical framework of discourse organization. During this exercise it is helpful to consult some other structural outlines such as those proposed in study Bibles and translation handbooks, but this should not be done before one’s own analysis and outline have been completed. The models of the TEV, CEV, and NIV are also useful with respect to larger discourse patterns and arrangements (i.e., in their major and minor section headings). Finally, time permitting, the outlines given in recognized exegetical commentaries may be examined and evaluated by the translation team.

Next, consider the smaller groupings (paragraphs or strophes) into which the various published versions divide the text under study. You may later decide to disagree with some of their postulated sectional divisions, but at least they give you a basis for comparison with your own results.

More experienced translators can then go on to carry out a propositional analysis of the complete pericope, or perhaps only certain complex portions of it, in order to arrive at a more precise indication of how the discourse is organized.<sup>12</sup> A structural-thematic outline of the kind prepared in this step provides a necessary conceptual framework that permits one to make a more accurate assessment of the full artistic beauty and rhetorical power of all the literary devices that the text at hand incorporates. Artistry and rhetoric must always be viewed in terms of the salience and significance of the larger compositional whole as well as the major functional aim(s) that the original author wanted to achieve in relation to his intended audience (based on a study of their most probable setting of communication, sec. 1).

---

<sup>12</sup> For a recent overview of discourse analysis procedures, see the various chapters in Dooley and Levinsohn 2001; for a simplified presentation based on the Psalms, see Wendland 2002a, chap. 3.

### ***1.8 Step 8: Prepare a complete semantic (word/symbol/motif) study***

Having established the overall segmentation and internal structure of the passage under study, one is ready to give some attention to the details of its semantic texture and cognitive construction. Begin by underlining, or marking in some other way, all the primary theological concepts and other repeated expressions in the discourse. These key terms and thematic motifs (the latter being derived from the larger document or from the Scripture at large) will consist of nouns, verbs, and sometimes adjectives—or in semantic terms, entities, events, and attributes (e.g., ‘holiness/sanctify/holy’). In the case of poetry, any prominent *word pairs* should also be noted (e.g., ‘love-mercy’, ‘rock-fortress’, ‘cry-call out’, ‘clean-pure’). You may already be well acquainted with these significant words and phrases, but a review of their distinct senses and range of meanings is necessary so that they are correctly understood as used specifically in the text under consideration and according to their individual literary contexts. For a basic understanding of such terms the notes and cross-references of a good study Bible or the pertinent book in the UBS *Translator’s Handbook* or the SIL *Exegetical Summary* series may suffice, but more difficult expressions and concepts require the additional use of Bible dictionaries, topical encyclopedias, analytical commentaries, and if possible, biblical language lexicons (especially those based on semantic domains, e.g., Louw and Nida 1989, de Blois 2000).

Such a detailed analysis of essential vocabulary, including all figurative or symbolic language, will enable you to reconsider the structural-thematic outline you formulated in step 7. Some revisions may now be necessary. The main thing is to recognize the larger *unity* of the composition—how all of its parts fit together and all of its L-R devices operate in harmony to convey the essential theological or moral content and communicative purpose of the whole. Of course, exceptions and anomalies do occur, and these should not be ignored or smoothed over. Review any apparent conceptual gaps, conflicts, and other outstanding points of difficulty or opacity to see if your plan for the complete discourse can assist in the interpretation of the remaining problem areas. It may well be that these are features of deliberate disjunction (see step 4) intended to signal some key juncture or idea of special importance within the larger pericope.

### ***1.9 Step 9: Analyze any remaining linguistic and literary features***

This step in the analysis process takes care of the “leftovers.” All of the stylistic devices and compositional techniques that were not fully considered during the preceding structural and thematic studies are now to be analyzed in relation to what has already been discovered. For example, the various significant literary forms that occur in the pericope might now be studied in terms of their quality, quantity, distribution, location, and semantic interaction. In addition, some unusual or heretofore unexplained linguistic usages or arrangements may turn out, on closer examination, to be clearly “rhetorical” in terms of their particular communicative purpose. Again, the emphasis should be upon discovering form-functional unity within diversity. The point is not to simply provide neat literary labels for each of the different devices that are present, but rather to determine the extent to which they have been effectively utilized in order to enhance their individual and cumulative effect in the discourse at large. It may be possible then to show how style serves to reinforce the central message being conveyed by the complete pericope as well as by its constituent parts—that is, in accordance with the text’s organizational outline (step 7, which may or may not require further revision at this stage).

This would also be the time to carry out any special investigation that relates to the structure, style, and (proposed) pragmatic operation of different types of discourse, such as poetic, predictive, narrative, or hortatory/paraenetic texts. With regard to this last category, the prophetic or apostolic writings, for example, one could apply the argument-structure model (see 6.2.5 of *Translating the Literature of Scripture [TLS]*). In the case of narrative discourse, one would want to pay closer attention to such important features as plot structure and development,



character depiction, dramatic dialogic interaction, point of view, and the influence of the contextual setting on the account (see further below). Poetry, of course, requires a different set of investigative methods in terms of type and focus (e.g., procedures pertaining to parallelism, condensation, concentrated imagery, sound plays, liturgical language, and rhythmic diction). Other discourse types and subtypes—from complete apocalypses (e.g., Ezekiel 38–39) to individual parables and proverbs (as in the Gospels)—would each call for its own specific literary perspective and analytical approach to supplement the more general guidelines described here.

### ***1.10 Step 10: Note the major speech functions and their interaction in the discourse***

The total meaning package of a biblical text includes not only its content (information), but also its expressions of emotion, attitude, preference (value), and purpose. The original writer carefully chose his structure and style—the “artistry” of discourse—in order to communicate these vital aspects of a life-related message. They must not be ignored in any exegetical or literary study, whether or not a translation is the ultimate aim.

For example, although it is a psalm’s principal religious function that determines its genre (see step 2), the principal communicative aim of some of the included strophes (stanzas) may be different. This is because the successive structural units of poetic discourse often refer to different situations (“speech events,” each composed of a sequence of interrelated “speech acts”) as far as the interaction of the psalmist with his (implied) audience is concerned. Consequently they express different aspects of his involvement with them, hence also of his message to them. The individual speech acts are best analyzed in terms of rhetorical purpose, what the speaker/writer intended to accomplish by means of his words (i.e., the utterance *illocution* as discussed in 214–218 of *TLS*). One frequently finds passages of encouragement, promise, warning, rebuke, commitment, consolation, and condemnation in the psalms, and these motives are frequently accompanied by expressions of the appropriate emotion, such as joy, sorrow, fear, pain, trust, despair, and hope. The same sort of intentional, volitional, and connotative diversity occurs in other types of biblical discourse, particularly where direct discourse (as in narrative) or its equivalent (as in the Epistles) is involved. Oftentimes various combinations, mixtures, or degrees of overlapping may be discerned in terms of communicative function as the discourse progresses from one context to another.<sup>13</sup>

All of these functions and feelings, whether major or minor in scope and importance, are an important part of the author’s assumed intention as he composed the original message. Thus they need to be identified at their point of occurrence in the text. These connotative features must be noted along with the various literary and rhetorical devices (e.g., rhetorical questions, exclamations, intensifiers, repetition, syntactic displacement, phonological embellishment) that help to reveal and highlight them. In particular, the analyst needs to record any special concentration of such devices, for this may serve to mark an emotional apex within the development of a discourse or one of its integral constituents. This sort of emotive-attitudinal mapping is important: it ensures that the apparent *interlocutionary dynamics* and *argument arrangement* of the pericope under study will be functionally reproduced, to the extent possible, during the translation process.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Fawcett’s warning applies to any functional analysis: “This is one of the most frequent criticisms of function-based translation taxonomies: they assume a monolith where there is really multifunctionality. Although the overall aim of a text is important, we still have to concentrate on the mosaic of subtextual functions” (1997:108).

<sup>14</sup> “[A]s part of their understanding of how a text is constructed and functions, translators should be able to recognize not just the specific functions of cause, reason, time, etc., but also the more general functions of elaboration (restating or clarifying), extension (adding to or modifying) and enhancement (extending by specification)” (Fawcett 1997:97).

To help in determining the personal interaction that underlies the discourse of a particular psalm, it may be viewed as a dramatic dialogue in some cases or as a prayer-conversation between the psalmist and God. Sometimes other participants enter this sacred speech event, either as speakers or addressees (e.g., the psalmist's enemies, detractors, or his fellow worshipers in the house of God). How do these different groups interact with one another in terms of their speech patterns as the psalm progresses? Who is speaking to whom, under what circumstances, for what purpose, and with what sort of mood, emotion, viewpoint, or bias? An even greater challenge in this respect is presented by the prophetic writings, which are notorious for their various levels and diverse combinations of speaker-addressee engagement.

Another question is whether an overall plan, or pattern of speech acts or illocutions, is manifested in the complete discourse (the "text act"). There may be a distinct structure of this kind that either dominates or complements the organization of a text's thematic content.<sup>15</sup> The more fully that you the translator (or consultant) can imagine yourself engaging as an active partner in the dialogue of the larger discourse, the more accurately you will be able to understand the writer's communicative situation and then dynamically convey his intentions in the TL—or be able to advise other translators how to do so. Interactive role-playing (for instance, modeling that between Christ and his disciples, Christ and the Pharisees, Christ and the surrounding crowd, or between the key participants of a parable) can also help a creative team analyze these various text-internal speech acts and their illocutionary interrelationships.

### ***1.11 Step 11: Do an L-R comparison for possible form-functional matches***

To this point in the analytical process, the focus of attention has been upon the SL and the original biblical text. Now translators must turn to their own language, the TL and its literature, both secular and religious, oral and written. The same kind of "mining" investigation that was done with respect to the original text will now be done within the TL in order to discover, assemble, categorize, and evaluate the verbal resources available for rendering the Scriptures as poetically or rhetorically as possible. The goal, as always, is to accomplish this task in a functionally equivalent manner in selected relevant respects, including now literary artistry as well as primary semantic content and communicative intent. Indigenous poetry and prose will have its own inventory of texts, contexts, and linguistic features (phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discourse-related) to be explored, and there can be no shortcuts when seeking to discover and document these for use in translation.

The TL features that must be investigated include the distinct genres and subtypes, traditional as well as modern; discourse structures, markers, and arrangements; stylistic devices in terms of their form and function, denotation and connotation; rhetorical techniques and their application within complete texts and included portions; typical vocabulary, formulas, and figurative language; shifts in "register" (i.e., typical speech variations according to language *medium*, *user*, and *use*);<sup>16</sup> and finally, all of these features in relation to specific settings of oral performance and social distribution or use.

These disparate aspects of poetic and prosaic composition will each have to be carefully tested for its suitability or appropriateness for translating the Scriptures. If people are not accustomed to dynamic literary language in the Bible (perhaps due to the strong influence of an existing

---

<sup>15</sup> See Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:4-6, 97-101 for an overview of this sort of "conversational analysis" intended to reveal the structure of dialogic discourse, for example in terms of speech "turns" and "moves."

<sup>16</sup> "[A]ll translators should be able to perform a register analysis ... in order to have an understanding of the text they are translating which goes beyond the simple level of denotation and allows them to choose the appropriate register in the target language ..." (Fawcett 1997:83). Note that Fawcett provides a helpful summary of some of the principal sociolinguistic aspects of register as these relate to translation (ibid.:74-84).

literal version), then some preliminary explanation and language-specific illustration will be necessary. This will at least shed light on how, or if, a literary rendering will be received. But once it is understood that the original biblical books are artistic and rhetorical as well as theological in nature, receptors will usually respond positively to skillful, yet sensitive, attempts to make them sound that way also in their mother tongue. Thus the stage is set for the final, indeed the climactic, step in this whole set of heuristic procedures, namely, the actual translation process itself.

### ***1.12 Step 12: Prepare a trial translation and test it against other versions***

Once a biblical pericope or book has been analyzed according to the previous steps (or some modification of them), a translation in the TL may now be composed. (This assumes that some preliminary interlingual transfer of ideas and experimentation with literary forms has been done along the way.) First, prepare a *literal* rendering of the piece, unless such a version already exists in the language. Base it on the SL text or an interlinear version of the SL text with English or some other language of wider communication. This will give you a general sense of the text's original *form* and essential *content* (i.e., its fundamental lexical and conceptual inventory). Then if there are any well-done meaning-oriented translations in the major lingua franca of your region, assess their potential value as "models." Also look at the vernacular versions that exist in a language related to your own, whether good or bad. They too can be helpful for comparative purposes.<sup>17</sup>

These model versions, considered together with the SL-to-TL analysis that was completed during steps 1–11, will enable you (as an individual or a team) to move on from this to then produce an idiomatic, oral-aurally sensitive rendering of the biblical text in your own language. The careful comparative process is intended to provide you with an understanding of the essential meaning of the original message and suggest some possible ways of expressing this in your language. As you work, remember the important communication principles of *efficiency* (current ease and economy of expression), *accuracy* (with regard to original content and purpose), *effectiveness* (immediate discourse impact and appeal), and *relevance* (in terms of the contemporary sociocultural, literary, and ecclesiastical setting). The goal is to represent in the TL the closest literary-functional equivalent and a fully natural and contextualized correspondent of what you have determined to be the heart of the message conveyed by the biblical text.

The preceding outline would suggest that Bible translation must be a rigorously *analytical* and a systematically *comparative* text-based exercise.<sup>18</sup> A close parallel examination of a number of versions, especially those in related languages, shows you how others have understood and expressed the aspects of meaning presented by the same text that you are dealing with. It is particularly important to pay special attention to the *differences*, both large and small (the latter quickly add up to make a great disparity), that appear among the several versions consulted. Be able to specify what these differences are in terms of linguistic form and what stylistic or functional effect they have on the respective texts. In many cases, the diversity is simply a reflection of the diverse languages involved or of different methods of translation, whether literal or idiomatic. But at times the variants will be more significant. One or another may represent a failure to convey the intended meaning (content + intent) or even an obvious error such as an addition, modification, or omission.

---

<sup>17</sup> If linguistically competent, bilingual staff are available, have them prepare a back-translation into the TL of a good vernacular version in a closely related language, if one is available. This would provide another excellent model, one that might be even more helpful than a version in one of the LWCs that the translators "know" but are not really very competent in. If the vernacular model is too literal and not "literary" enough, its text could be modified in the TL as the translators proceed.

<sup>18</sup> In Wendland 2000a I present some explanatory notes as well as an illustration of this sort of a practical text-comparative exercise.

Finally, it is important to extend this comparative method to the TL constituency, using various formal and informal testing methods. In many settings, this will require the development of oral-aural assessment procedures, not only written ones. The purpose is to gain enough feedback—both corrective and suggestive—so that when the translation is published, whether as portions or in its entirety, it will be met with the widest possible acceptance.

A careful comparative examination of texts, together with the insights gained in testing the early drafts with TL speakers in various settings of use, will surely reveal problems. All of the exegetical and translational difficulties that come to a translator's attention during this process need to be discussed, corrected if necessary, and perhaps also evaluated in terms of how they originated. This is also a good time to consider the *medium* of communication with regard to producing a more readable (legible) or hearable (intelligible) translation in terms of its intended format of presentation.

## 2.0 A ten-step exegetical methodology

We will now review the methodology that was outlined above, one that lends itself to a *LiFE* (*Literary Functional Equivalence*) approach to Bible translation. It is offered merely as a general suggestion as to how a text analysis might be carried out in ten steps. It will be applied to Matthew 25:31–46, a passage that is basically narrative in nature, but exhibits a number of literary, even poetic, characteristics. Obviously, various modifications could be made to the ten steps (reduced from the preceding 12) in terms of composition and order of arrangement, and perhaps even more steps could be combined into one. (For a somewhat different presentation of these steps applied to the book of Obadiah, see Wendland 2004b, chap. 7; cf. Wilt & Wendland 2008:chs. 8-10). Even so, all of the critical factors mentioned would somehow need to be included within any comprehensive exegetical study.

This set of procedures is designed to prepare the ground for a subsequent *LiFE*-style translation, which would already have been anticipated as the analysis is being carried out. As we have been suggested, a *LiFE* rendition is one that aims to extract more of the vital artistic essence from a given biblical document and then articulate this “spirit” of the text within a specific TL version, whether intuitively in response to one's creative gift or in accordance with some specific compositional guidelines. One should be ready to apply what is learned during the exegetical stage to the preparation of an artistic-rhetorical translation, whether to a greater or lesser extent, in accordance with the principle of relevance and the *brief*, in particular, its primary TL-oriented *Skopos*.

The following exercise will be carried out as a cooperative and interactive, question-driven venture. After an initial explanation of each step, the process of analysis is started according to a recommended procedure or through a series of questions for investigation. The student is required to complete a study of the discourse for that particular step, either according to the outlined procedure, or using another method that is more familiar. The object of the exercise is not simply to mechanically follow a given technique of discourse analysis but to experiment, whenever possible, with different procedures during the process of discovering a practical methodology that one is confident about applying on a regular basis. The ultimate goal is to derive from a close exegetical study the information and insights that will prove useful for translating the text at hand more accurately, appropriately, and acceptably in another language.

Now let us examine **Matthew 25:31–46** in a literal English translation (RSV) and in the original language. The RSV will be given first, in an unformatted form, and the formatted Greek text next. Read the passage through several times in order to familiarize yourself with its content. Make a mental note of any aspect of discourse form or content that strikes a special chord. At least one of your readings should be aloud – of the Greek text if possible. Why is an oral articulation of this passage helpful, even necessary, for understanding it (consider its textual setting)? Which structural features are thereby highlighted?

<sup>31</sup> When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' <sup>46</sup> And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

## I

31	Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ·	<b>A</b>
32	καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων,	
33	καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν <u>πρόβατα</u> ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ <u>ἐρίφια</u> ἐξ εὐωνύμων.	
34	τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, Δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρός μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.	<b>B</b>
35	ἐπείνασα γὰρ καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην καὶ συνηγάγετέ με,	<b>Ca</b>
36	γυμνὸς καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἡσθένησα καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην καὶ ἤλθατε πρὸς με.	<b>b</b> <b>c</b> <b>d</b> <b>e</b> <b>f</b>
37	τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ <u>οἱ δίκαιοι</u> λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν;	<b>D</b> <b>a</b> <b>b</b>
38	πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν;	<b>c</b> <b>d</b>
39	πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενοῦντα ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ ἤλθομεν πρὸς σε;	<b>e</b> <b>f</b>
40	καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.	<b>E</b>

## II.

41	Τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων, Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.	B'
42	ἐπείνασα γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με,	C'a' b'
43	ξένος ἤμην καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνὸς καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενῆς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με.	c' d' e' f'
44	τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμέν σοι;	D' a' b' c' d' e' f'
45	τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.	E'
46	καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον,  οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.	A'

### 2.1 Step 1: Study the cotext

Step 1 is to investigate the wider linguistic setting of the passage to be analyzed and note any points of continuation, correspondence, and/or contrast.

Before beginning a detailed study of the focal text itself, one must scrutinize its surrounding discourse cotext, both immediate and remote, in order to determine any close connections with the passage under consideration. It is also necessary to confirm the structural integrity and unity of the passage, in particular, the features that demarcate it as a discrete and self-standing compositional unit. Especially important in this respect is the cotext that occurs *prior* to the text under examination, since certain aspects of it are likely to have some influence upon the overall development of the author's current discourse.

*Q: Do you think Matthew 25:31–46 is an independent pericope and thus worthy of a section heading, or not? Cite some textual evidence in support of your conclusion.*

*What links this passage with the preceding pericope and what separates the two?*

A discourse analysis of the major section of Matthew's Gospel covering chapters 24 – 25 reveals the following: First of all, we observe that the 25:31–46 pericope appears to form the final section of a tripartite, seven-sectioned A-B-A' ring composition. After an initial narrative opening, or *aperture* (in 24:1–3; see 26:1 for the next major aperture), Christ begins his paraenetic instruction concerning the end of the age by describing some of the salient signs of "those days." His words unfold a subtle blend of key events that will occur during the prophetic times of both the messianic and also the eschatological ages (24:4–31//unit A).

This semi-narrative prediction suddenly breaks off at 24:32 (“So from the fig tree learn this parable”), and the discourse shifts into a parabolic mode with a series of five dramatic object lessons. One hortatory passage reinforces another in stressing the need for people to get ready for a day of decision (segments 24:32–35, 36–44, 45–51; 25:1–13, 14–30 of unit B).

An apparently resumptive section A' (25:31–46) then appears, the seventh portion of the larger discourse begun in chapter 24. This vividly climactic unit appears to continue the eschatological account where A left off; namely, with the Son of Man's coming from heaven in glory, accompanied by his angels and in the presence of all humanity (24:30–31; cf. 25:31–32). The contrastive judgement dialogue scene ends with the consignment of the wicked to “eternal punishment,” a theme that marks the ending of several of the preceding parables (e.g., 24:51, 25:30), a case of structural closure (*epiphora*). Thus the ambiguity of genre (i.e., is it history and/or parable? – see section 3.6.2) may be a deliberate rhetorical device intended to focus not so much on the individual details of the eschatological event but on the certainty of its occurrence and the need to prepare in advance. The text has clearly been constructed to produce a structural and rhetorical peak in this third and final section, especially with its summary conclusion regarding the great separation between “the righteous” and the rest (25:46). Such a perspective is supported by the similar passage at the end of the first major discourse of Christ in Matthew's Gospel, in 7:24–27 (the parable of the wise and foolish builders), which also manifests a binary structure and is ethically toned as well as thematically contrastive.

*Q: What do you think of this proposed A-B-A' structural arrangement of the larger discourse of which Matthew 25:31–46 is a part? Do you have any revisions to suggest?*

*Is the middle, parabolic section (B) clearly distinct?*

*What are the implications of this sort of literary segmentation of the biblical text for translation?*

*If such a textual arrangement is valid, and helpful for understanding Christ's teaching here, how can its relevance be expressed or made apparent in a contemporary Bible translation?*

Major text-critical issues should also be studied as part of the “cotext” at this initial stage of the analysis. In such an investigation one considers the principal variants or alternative readings which may apply at different points in the passage. Any special problem areas must be identified and a tentative resolution arrived at *before* the text itself is examined in detail as an integral unit of discourse. Preliminary decisions in this regard may be reviewed and revised later in light of the text-analysis procedures that follow.

With respect to the original Greek text of Matthew 25:31–46 there do not seem to be any outstanding difficulties. Metzger's *Textual Commentary* (1994) and Omanson's *A Textual Guide* (2006) do not list a single point of contention here. Carlton's *Translator's Reference Translation* (2001) notes two minor variants, but neither one has much manuscript support or is supported by the various versions.

According to Carlton (*ibid.*), a number of manuscripts have the adjective “holy” in 25:31 used as a modifier of “angels.”

*Q: How important is this addition?*

*How might a copyist have introduced the word “holy” here (see Luke 9:26)?*

*Why, in light of Matthew 16:27, is the reading without “holy” probably the correct one – that is, over and above the external manuscript evidence?*

Regarding 25:41, Carlton (*ibid.*) says that a few manuscripts specify “the Father” as having prepared the fire of punishment for the devil and his angels.

*Q: What might have caused this addition (see v. 34)?*

*If “the Father” is left out of your translation, is it clear to most readers who prepared the fire?*

*Many might conclude that the speaker, Christ, is the agent. This ambiguity thus turns out to be a major translational issue rather than a minor textual one. How would you deal with it in YL?*

## **2.2 Step 2: Specify the literary genre**

Step 2 is to identify the principal text type and subtypes along with their associated stylistic features and functional implications.

A prior read-through of the pericope or book designated for analysis should give one an indication of the text’s primary genre (discourse type), plus any minor genres incorporated within it. This involves specifying the major communicative purpose for which the text was prepared in light of a given sociocultural setting or interpersonal situation. It also involves identifying any typical literary features that mark this kind of composition. The text type may be the same as, similar to, or different from what precedes or follows it in the surrounding discourse.

The genre may be compound or mixed – that is, composed either sequentially or simultaneously of two or more distinct literary categories, some of which may be clearly secondary in importance. Each distinct (sub)genre will normally manifest a distinctive style and function, with the primary genre often modifying the communicative aim of any secondary ones included within it.

We see an example of this sort of combination at the beginning of Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

*Q: What is the function of Paul’s personal narrative testimony in Galatians 1:11 – 2:14?*

*Does this section end at 2:14 or is there another possible terminus? Explain your conclusion.*

This step in the analysis includes an identification of all the individual compositional features and stylistic devices that serve both to constitute and also to distinguish, or mark, the primary genre and its subtypes. Any credible analysis of the structure and rhetoric of a given literary work must begin with the notion of genre, for the conventions of a given genre are normally reflected both in the macro- and microstylistic features of the text, whether oral or written. The genre of Matthew as a whole may be specified most generally as a *biographical narrative*.

*Q: How would you define the term “narrative”? Compare your definition with one from a dictionary or handbook on literature.*

*What are the primary characteristics of a narrative discourse?*

*In the case of Matthew, why is it necessary to qualify the designation of narrative with biographical – what does this suggest about the story that is being told?*

*Why is it important to keep this qualification in mind as we read this (or any) of the Gospels?*

Matthew’s narrative is also dramatic in nature – that is, it features an internal plot that guides the selection and presentation of characters and events. A plot normally moves gradually towards some major peak in the depiction of the life of the chief character(s), followed by a much shorter resolution.

*Q: Where does the major peak of Matthew’s narrative occur? Why do you say so?*

*How does this compare with the plots of the other Gospels?*

Many analysts prefer to specify the discourse type of a work like Matthew even more precisely in an effort to better account for its structure, content selection, and style. For example, some would say that Matthew also exhibits the characteristics of an *apology*, that is, a formal



defense of the person of Christ and/or the Christian religion. Evaluate this opinion with an argument either for or against it.

Several questions confront us as we attempt to further specify the nature of the Matthew 25:31–46 pericope. Is it presented as a historical or a parable text? Some scholars classify the discourse as *prophetic history* – that is, as nonfiction that incorporates certain apocalyptic features within an eschatological temporal setting (cf. Dan. 7:13–14). Others point to the prominent comparative element that is introduced with the metaphor of the sheep and goats in verse 32, the imagery of which then implicitly colors the remainder of the text. These scholars view this pericope as a parable that appears to function as a climax – the significant seventh occurrence! – in the sequence of Christ’s “parables of separation,” all of which (7:24–27; 13:24–30 [explained in 36–43]; 13:47–50; 24:45–51; 25:1–13; 25:14–30; 25:31–46) are oriented towards the final judgement.

*Q: How would you label the Matthew 25:31–46 passage – as factual prophetic history or as an illustrative parable?*

*Would your classification make any difference in how you eventually translate this text in YL?*

*For example, does a parable in your oral or written tradition present any formal markers (e.g., introductory or concluding formulae, special tense-aspect markers, or distinctive particles of participant reference) to indicate that it is a non-historical discourse?*

*What difference does it make to one’s understanding of this pericope whether it is construed as historical or fictional?*

*If the text is not marked with regard to genre in your translation, how will the audience be likely to interpret it?*

*Is an explanatory note needed to clarify this issue? If so, how would you word it?*

### **2.3 Step 3: Find the points of major disjunction**

Step 3 is to note all “break points” in the text, that is, places where one or more prominent shifts in form or content occur.

Breaks, or points of disjunction (major) and transition (minor), are created within a literary text whenever there is a notable change or content modification with respect to time, place, topic, personal participants, central participant, speaker, addressee, text type (genre), and/or sequence of events. Where several of these indicators of shifting co-occur, such as a variation in place and time or speaker and subject, the break is more prominent, hence better substantiated. Normally a new paragraph begins at that point—or a new section, if the disjunction is greater in terms of the number of breaks manifested. Thus, an adjacent pair of disjunctions create between them a “chunk” of text, that is, a conceptual or thematic unit consisting of a variable number of sentences that manifest a perceptible, memorable coherence based on time, place, topic, discourse type, and/or communicative purpose. Other, supporting signals of disjunction within a literary text are the formal markers of a new topic or a digression (e.g., NP-fronting, nominalization, use of an independent pronoun), characteristic discourse formulae and transitional expressions (e.g., conjunctions or phrases of aperture like “And it came to pass,” “In that day,” “Thus says the LORD,” and “After this,” or of closure like “oracle of Yahweh,” “Selah,” and “Amen”),<sup>19</sup> and concluding summary statements that typically signal the end of a complete unit of discourse (e.g., “Then they will know that I am the LORD” and “And [X] his son succeeded him as king” and “To him be the glory forever!”).

---

<sup>19</sup> These are not completely predictable markers. For example, note the position of “amen” in Rev. 7:12 and what the twofold mention of “amen” serves to mark.

*Q: Where would you posit break points (new paragraph units) in connection with the Matthew 25:31–46 pericope?*

Finding the breaks is not very difficult to figure out for this text, but the exercise will help you practice this aspect of discourse analysis in preparation for more difficult passages.

*List the verses at which you would begin a new paragraph as well as the shift(s) that occur at that point, along with any supporting text-break markers. Write your choices in the blank spaces of the diagram that follows. (More lines are provided than you will need.) The first and last segments, which are the outer boundaries of this pericope, have been done for you.*

verse number	type of shift(s) that occur as the preceding verse moves to the present one
25:31	new central participant explicitly identified – “the Son of Man”; shift from parable to prophecy; a different setting and dramatic situation is established.
26:1	shift from direct speech to narrative report; introductory transitional margin (“When Jesus had finished”); a change in the topic to be developed in subsequent verses.

#### ***2.4 Step 4: Plot the patterns of formal and conceptual repetition***

Step 4 is to record and posit the significance of any obvious patterns of linguistic reiteration within the discourse: phonological, lexical, syntactic, and textual.

Repetition may be exact (*replication*) or synonymous to varying degrees (*recursion*). The device occurs in oral as well as written discourse and may be of many different formal and semantic types, extending for textual spans that may be long or relatively short within a given composition. Recursion includes contrasts as well as similarities and may be manifested in parallel expressions as well as by intertwined and overlapping instances. Repetition is normally the most prominent, hence obvious characteristic of any literary discourse. The more repetition that occurs and the more exact it is in nature, the more poetic a text is regarded.

*Q: Why is exact repetition especially important for those who are aurally apprehending a text, and what are the implications of this for Bible translation at large and translation technique in particular?*

The individual instances of repetition will often create larger, sometimes overlapping patterns of formal structure and thematic significance within a passage. These may link up with the surrounding context on either side of the pericope under study. Such replication or recursion thus physically organizes and demarcates a text, both externally, on the boundaries of structural units, as well as internally by creating varied patterns of formal cohesion, including variable spans of participant reference. All this contributes to the text's distinct thematic meaning and communicative purpose, certain areas or aspects of which may also be foregrounded by reiteration as a marker of *prominence*.<sup>20</sup> By coordinating the key repetition patterns of a text with its major shifts in form and/or content (step 3) the analyst is able to make a preliminary proposal of the principal paragraph-level or strophe-level breaks within the discourse at large.

The main contours of the recursive patterns of the Matthew 25:31–46 pericope are shown in the diagram of the Greek text that was displayed at the beginning of section 3.6. There are two larger “panels” of constituent structure, I and II, each of which consists of five sub-units (A, B, C, D, and E). As it turns out, each of the internal elements of II (B'–E') contrasts with and serves as an effective counterfoil to those of the initial and corresponding unit I (B–E).

*Q: Can you discern this arrangement of the text in the SL text?*

*If not, refer to an interlinear version and make a copy of this display, including the letters that indicate the text's structural organization, using an English translation.*

The parallelism of panels I and II serves to reinforce both the dual and also the polar nature of the heavenly trial scene: Only two clearly defined groups are in the dock, and these are strongly antithetical in terms of character and hence also of the judgement that each group receives. (Notice that the only negatives of this passage, eight of them, occur in panel II.) One group, the one “on the right,” is publicly vindicated and lauded by the Lord; the other “on the left” is just as incisively repudiated and condemned.

*Q: Is this great division, or contrast, clear to you in the structure of the text?*

*Does the special format reveal this more clearly?*

*Would such an arrangement be too difficult or complicated for your typical TL audience to interpret? If so, can you propose any modifications that would simplify the format, but still highlight the text's contrastive nature?*

The repeated subsections of this larger structure (a–f and a'–f') may have further suggested to the original audience the absolute certainty of the Lord's judicial process as well as the legal precision whereby it is conducted. In addition, this carefully organized structure possibly may have been composed as an *isomorphic*, aural reflection that depicts the perfectly measured justice of the verdict and the corresponding righteousness of the Judge – as well as the great moral divide that now distinguishes, and will ultimately separate forever, two fundamentally antithetical ways of life (see Psalm 1).

*Q: Will the associations listed above be apparent to people of your cultural and literary setting when they read this passage? Explain why, or why not.*

---

<sup>20</sup> Anne Garber Kompaore points out that in directive discourse “the most thematic referent will have the highest frequency of pronominal references. The least thematic referent is the least likely to have any pronominal references” (2005:8; see also Kompaore 2004). On the importance to Bible translators of analyzing the patterns of participant reference in Hebrew discourse, see de Regt, 1999. Such a more detailed linguistic study could be profitably carried out during step 6 of our set of analysis procedures.

In a tightly constructed pattern of similarities such as we see in Matthew 25:31–46, one must also note any prominent variations or differences in terms of their possible rhetorical implications.

Consider and comment on the following disparities and their possible semantic implications:

1. Note the obvious condensation that appears in the response to the king from the defendants on his left (compare panels D' and D above). It is tempting to view this as a verbal reflection of the very lack of concern for the disadvantaged and needy that such people had just been found guilty of.
2. The Son of Man is referred to as speaking to “the righteous” in his judicial capacity as “king” in verses 34 and 40 (i.e., an *inclusio* within panel I), whereas he is not referred to in this way in the corresponding verses 41 and 45. This suggests that the unrighteous did not recognize or respect the Son’s royal authority and thus treated the lesser of his subjects accordingly.
3. The Lord, on the other hand, honors the righteous by calling them “my brothers” (v. 40); significantly the unrighteous are not so addressed in the parallel passage (v. 45). The notion of brotherhood certainly distinguishes the ethical attitude and actions of those mentioned in panel I, in sharp contrast to their counterparts in II, who could not even perceive a brother, let alone respond to the obvious needs of one (cf. Matt. 7:12).
4. It is obvious that segment A' of panel II is located out of its expected place. What might be the reason for this shift of position in terms of the larger narrative structure?

*Q: Which of the preceding observations do you think is the most significant for understanding this text?*

*Would it be helpful to point out any of these interpretive possibilities in marginal notes for this passage? Explain why or why not in relation to your own current or proposed Bible translation setting.*

## **2.5 Step 5: Discover and evaluate the artistic and rhetorical features**

Step 5 is to identify the chief artistic devices and rhetorical techniques within the whole text, especially at points of special concentration, and then to determine their local or global textual significance.

As steps 3 – 4 demonstrated, the internal break points and major recursive patterns reveal formal linguistic structures of different sizes in a literary text. Any biblical pericope will also manifest various kinds of poetic or prosaic stylistic technique. This compositional feature makes an added contribution to the pericope’s wider esthetic appeal and rhetorical impact, both on the local and global level of functional significance. A great diversity of Hebrew and Greek literary devices may be included here: figures of speech (*tropes*), comparative or contrastive elements of imagery, ellipsis and other types of condensation, word plays (*paronomasia*), alliteration and assonance, rhythm and rhyme, artful redundancy and conceptual expansion, syntactic relocation front or back, rhetorical and deliberative questions, irony and sarcasm, humor, paradox, enigma, and a balanced or patterned strophic/paragraph structure.

Such stylistic techniques are generally introduced for the purpose of polishing and persuasion, that is, with respect to a text’s form (artistry) and function (rhetoric). Therefore, these features need to be examined in relation to the salient patterns of repetition and the shifts in content previously noted as a way of indicating more overtly where structural boundaries and areas of focal, or foregrounded, meaning appear within the discourse (e.g., the emotive *climax*, thematic *peak*, *end-stress*, or *closure*). One’s initial conclusions in this regard are often supported or confirmed at places where these devices appear to be especially concentrated through *reiteration*, *juxtaposition*, or *incorporation*.

Comment on the special meaning and function (including any possible positional significance) of each of the following literary features that occur in Matthew 25:31–46. Refer to

the UBS *Translator's Handbook for Matthew* and/or some other reliable exegetical commentary or study Bible for additional assistance. For each literary feature, also identify a possible equivalent in YL. The first one has been done for you as an example of what to do here. Feel free to comment on any other rhetorical feature that you happen to notice in this text as you carry out the analysis.

Literary feature + verse no.	Identification of the feature	Function within the discourse
"in his glory," "throne of his glory" (v. 31)	repetition of the key term "glory" together with the reference to "his"	highlights the magnificent nature of this judgement scene and of its central character – the Son of Man – at the very beginning of the pericope
"as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (v. 32)		
"on his right...on (the) left" (v. 33)		
"inherit...(the) kingdom" (v. 34)		
"from (the) foundation of (the) world" (v. 34)		
"naked" (v. 36)		
"you came to me" (v. 36)		
"the righteous" (v. 37)		
"when...and when...and when" (vv. 37–39)		
"truly I tell you" (v. 40)		

"one of my brothers, the (very) least" (v. 40)		
"from me" (v. 41)		
"the cursed (ones)" (v. 41)		
"also they" (v. 44)		
"neither to/for me you did (it)" (v. 45)		
"into eternal punishment...into eternal life" (v. 46)		

## 2.6 Step 6: Do a complete discourse analysis

Step 6 is to prepare a detailed linguistic study of all verses within the pericope and propose an inclusive *topical-thematic summary*.

The preceding investigations of genre, textual demarcation, recursion, and the artistic and rhetorical features prepare the ground for a more systematic analysis of the chief linguistic properties of the passage at hand. Step 6 usually reveals some additional aspects of the passage's literary character as well. Such a study of the discourse as a whole may be carried out in different degrees of detail, ranging from a simple overview of the main clause constituents (S, V, O, etc.) as they occur in sequential combination to a full syntactic structural breakdown (kernel, colon) of the entire text.

The aim of such an analysis is to determine what the specific *grammatical constructions* (morphological and syntactic) chosen by the author to convey his content contribute to the expression of the text's overall meaning and function. The analyst considers, for example, the order of syntactic constituents within a clause, tracing the sequential reference to key participants in the text, the relationship of dependent clauses to each other and to independent clauses within sentence units (foreground-background), complexes of possessive constructions, sequences of prepositional phrases, juxtapositions of event nouns, and use of the passive voice, of nonfinite verbal forms (participles, infinitives), and of tense-sequence patterns. The analyst also seeks to discern what is distinctive (that is, *marked* or non-normal usage) within the microstructure of any passage and what is the implied literary significance of this.

Two methods of analysis will be illustrated in the rest of this section. The first involves a simple literal charting of clause units as they occur in the progression of the discourse. In order to do such an analysis you will need to refer to the Greek text or an interlinear version, which often reveals patterns and parallels that are not apparent in any translation, whether literal or idiomatic. The following, for example, is a display of the lexical constituents of Matthew 25:31–34 (Note that English words used to render one Greek word are connected by hyphens). Complete the chart for verses 35–40. When finished, compare your chart with those of other members of the class as a joint discussion exercise.

Ref.	LINK	Pre-Verb 1 (2)	VERBAL	Post-verb 1 (3)	Post-verb 2 (4)*
31a	Now when		he-comes	the Son of Man	in the glory his
31b	then		he-will sit	and all the angels	with him,
32a	and		they-will-be- assembled	on (the)-throne before him	of-glory his;
32b	and		he-will-separate	them	all the nations, from-one another
32c	just-as	the shepherd	he-separates	the sheep	from the goats,
33a	and		he-will-set	the sheep	on (the)-right-his,
33b	but		-----	the goats	on (the)-left.
34a	Then		he-will-say	the king	to the-(ones)
34b			"Come	on (the)-right-his: the blessed-ones	of Father my,
34c			inherit	the prepared for-you From (the)-foundation	kingdom Of-(the)-world."
35a					
35b					
35c					
35d					
35e					
35f					
36a					
36b					
36c					
36d					
36e					
36f					
37a					
37b					
37c					
37d					
37e					
38a					
38b					
38c					

38d

39a

39b

40a

40b

40c

40d

\* The numbers in parentheses simply indicate additional syntactic constituents that may be filled sequentially in either “pre-verb” or “post-verb” position. Obviously, the more distinct fillers there are, the more marked the clause is at that point. The term “verbal” includes finite verbs as well as predicative non-finite forms, such as participles, infinitives, and gerunds used verbally within a clause.

What can such a linguistic charting tell us about the text before us? Any noun, full pronoun, or noun phrase that occurs before the main verb (or an object/comment before a subject/topic in a non-finite or verbless clause) is potentially significant and normally marks something of interest or importance within the discourse (see also step 5).

*Q: Does that hold true on the chart above, for example at verse 32c? Discuss any other examples of this nature that you find.*

*Who are the chief participants of this discourse? Do you notice anything special about how any one of them is referred to in the text?*

*Does a single participant stand out as the main character of the account? If so, how is this person and discourse role marked linguistically?*

Anything unusual – that is, anything falling outside a normal (*unmarked*) NT Greek pattern – should be examined for its possibly special semantic significance within the text, e.g., ellipsis, expansion of information within a phrase, or repetition. (The same heuristic principle applies when a Hebrew text is being charted.)

*Q: Do you notice any instances of these marked phenomena in your chart?*

*Consider the various transitional expressions that appear, including any non-default conjunctions: What can these tell you about the construction of the discourse? (An example is τότε ‘then’ at v. 34a.)*

A chart like the one above can also be used to more systematically reveal the repetition of key words and semantic fields that form the basis for the theme or sub-theme that synthesizes the semantic essence of a particular paragraph (or larger) unit within the discourse. The salient elements in any thematic statement derived from such a study may also be highlighted by the various marked linguistic structures and literary devices that have already been mentioned (e.g., fronting of subject or object). These thematic summaries, which may be condensed further as section headings within the biblical text, are usually generated intuitively after a careful analysis of the discourse, but scholars are currently developing more explicit principles and procedures for elucidating the nature of “theme” (and “rheme”) as well as theme-shifting in literary texts.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Floor 2004, which may be accessed in a pdf file on the website of the Centre for Bible Interpretation and Translation in Africa (<http://academic.sun.ac.za/as/cbta/>). Floor (2004:v) defines the notion of theme as the “developing and coherent core or thread of a discourse in the mind of the speaker-author and hearer-reader, functioning as the prominent macrostructure of the discourse. The information structure, with its topics and focus structures and its strategies, can be used as a tool to identify and analyze themes. These categories and strategies together are called theme traces when they occur in

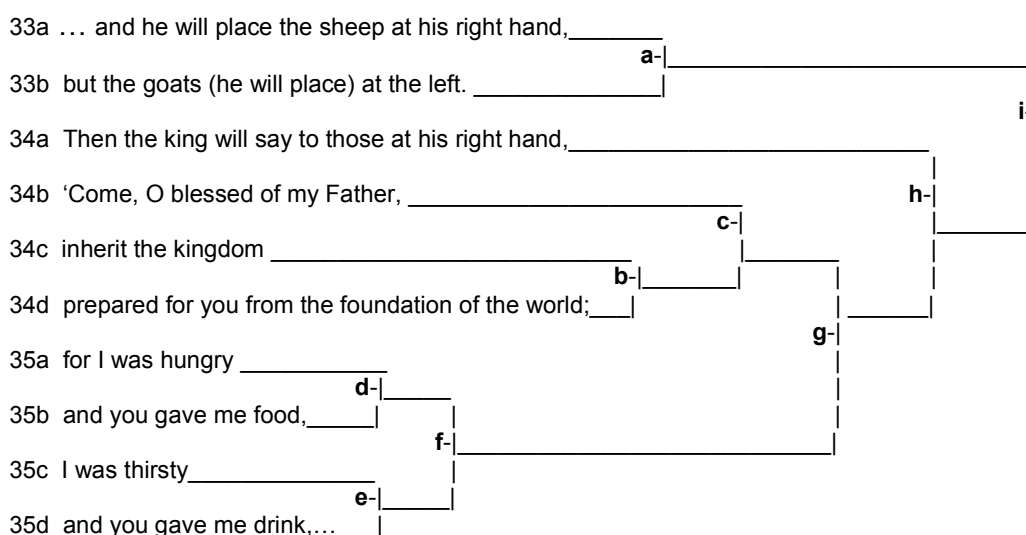


*Q: Which prominent notions appear already in the small text portion charted above? Study the entire pericope of Matthew 25:31–46 and identify the three or four most important thematic ideas, based on conceptual recursion and stylistic marking.*

*Next, compose a thematic summary for this portion of the book. Then condense your summary into an appropriate set of section headings for the unit. (You may decide that only one section heading is needed.) Compare your proposal to those of other Bibles and record any major differences.*

If you have time, complete a constituent charting of the remainder of the pericope – that is, through verse 46 – and comment on any item in your chart that is noteworthy. (This type of systematic study provides a framework within which to integrate the results of steps 1 – 5.)

The second method of discourse analysis is a more detailed type of *syntactic-semantic* study. It is illustrated below with reference to Matthew 25:33–35b. This kind of analysis is useful in certain cases, as when dealing with a particularly difficult passage (which the following is not).



The various semantic relationships between clause units may be specified as follows (the *base* is the clause that occurs first in a symmetrical pairing, or is the principal clause of an asymmetrical pair; 33a is of course connected to the last clause of v. 32, and 35d to the next clause in v. 35):

<b>a</b> = base-contrast	<b>b</b> = base-attribution	<b>c</b> = base-addition
<b>d</b> = circumstance-base	<b>e</b> = circumstance-base	<b>f</b> = base-addition
<b>g</b> = command-reason	<b>h</b> = base-content	<b>i</b> = base-sequential time

This diagramming technique in effect forces the analyst to examine the text more carefully in terms of its sequence of meaningful relationships.<sup>22</sup> In all probability, there will be differences

marked syntactic constructions or in other prominence configurations like relexicalisation, end-weight, and repetition of macrowords. Theme traces are defined with the following wording: A theme trace is a clue in the surface form of a discourse, viewed from the perspective of information structure that points to the cognitive macrostructure or theme of a text. This clue is in the form of (1) a marked syntactical configuration, be it marked word-order or marked in the sense of explicit and seemingly 'redundant', all signaling some thematic sequencing strategy, or (2) some recurring concept(s) signaling some prominence and coherence."

For another important collection of literary-oriented cognitive linguistic studies of theme see Louwerse and van Peer 2002.

<sup>22</sup> For further explanation of this method, see Wendland 2002, sections 3.3–3.4. Levinsohn (2006b) recommends a more pragmatic approach to the interpretation of Greek (presumably also Hebrew)

of opinion as to how to classify the various paired relationships; for example, are *d* and *e* better viewed as “circumstance-base” or as “base-sequential time”? There will also be differences of opinion as to how to link them up in a hierarchical structure that incorporates the entire passage under consideration. The aim is not to seek the single “correct” answer in each and every case, but simply to become more aware of the possibilities for interpreting the text and the different types of evidence that supports one option over against another. It is especially important to observe the higher-level (rightmost) connections since these provide overall sense and coherence to the section as a whole and consequently need to be clearly reflected in any translation (e.g., at *g* where two major text constituents are joined by the relation of command-reason).

*Q: Evaluate the semantic relationships shown above and suggest any modifications or corrections that you feel are needed.*

*How would you mark the structural relationship indicated at point *g* so that it is clearly evident in YL?*

*Why is this transition of special importance in the discourse?*

*Now try to make your own diagram of the logical links between constituent clauses in verses 44–46. Discuss your individual results in class.*

An even more detailed *semantic structure display* can be prepared after or in place of the preceding text analysis. This sort of display is similar to the syntactic-semantic diagram illustrated above but goes further in that it attempts to make all implicit information explicit, including the hierarchically arranged logical connections that relate individual *propositions* on different levels of compositional organization.<sup>23</sup> But for most purposes in the normal translation setting, such precision will not be necessary: a simple topical outline will suffice. This should be formulated in any case after the linguistic analysis of step 6 in order to prepare any section headings that will be needed. Consider, for example, the following outline for the pericope of Matthew 25:31–46:

#### **Drama of the Last Judgement**

- a. Introduction: The Son of Man enacts his judgement:  
“the sheep” are separated from “the goats” (31–33)
- b. The king invites and commends “those on his right” (34–36)
- c. ‘The righteous’ query their commendation and the king responds (37–40)
- d. The king condemns and accuses “those on his left” (41–43)
- e. The left query their condemnation and the king responds (44–45)
- f. Conclusion: the king’s judgement is carried out (46)

---

conjunctions. Thus the connective γὰρ at the beginning of v. 35 serves “to signal that what follows strengthens a preceding assertion” and does not necessarily indicate the semantic relations of explanation, grounds, or reason. If no marking of such a relationship of reinforcement is included in a translation (e.g., by omitting any conjunction as in the CEV), the original inferential connection between the discourse constituents (in this case, v. 34 and vv. 35ff.) is weakened or even lost. Similarly, the conjunction δὲ signals “that what follows marks progression (development)” in the discourse; καὶ signals “that what follows is to be associated with what precedes, without specifying how”; and οὖν signals “that what follows is a resumption (in most instances) and advancement of the same theme line as before” (Levinsohn 2006b:18). Clearly, further research is needed in this area so that the primary implications inherent in these conjunctions can be reproduced in translation, whether by corresponding conjunctions (if available) or some other device, e.g., tail-head repetition, word-order variations, deictic particles, etc.

<sup>23</sup> SIL International has published a number of helpful New Testament analyses of this nature, a recent example being *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of James* by George and Helen Hart (2001).

*Q: How well does the above outline express what you feel are the essential theme and sub-themes of Matthew 25:31–46?*

*Based on your own linguistic and literary analysis of the text, do you wish to propose any changes to this outline, whether to remove a certain heading, re-word one, or add another?*

*What do you begin to notice about the larger organization of Matthew 25:31–46? Point out any salient correspondences or contrasts of thematic significance.*

*Compare this outline with the section heading(s) that you proposed earlier. Do any modifications seem necessary in light of the additional discourse analysis that you have carried out? If so, explain where and why.*

## **2.7 Step 7: Investigate the referential framework**

Step 7 is to study all key concepts, technical terms, images, and symbols along with their interrelationships in light of the text's ancient Near Eastern sociocultural and religious setting.

Having examined the basic lexical, syntactic, and semantic shape of the discourse during the previous steps, in this seventh step we focus upon the distinctive content of the pericope and its main individual constituents, that is, the principal lexical clusters, key thematic and associated concepts (whether literally or figuratively expressed), any cultural symbols, plus all prominent semantic fields, or *mental spaces*, that the text evokes or alludes to (see Stockwell 2002, chap. 7). In short, the analyst must carefully think through the entire passage and all that it either presupposes or implies, especially in light of its ancient Near Eastern background.

We may distinguish here between *key concepts* and *technical terms*. Key concepts (e.g., “law,” “righteousness,” “grace,” “evil”) tend to be more abstract and thus may allow for a variable translation, in keeping with the context and lexical collocation. Technical terms (e.g., “sacrifice,” “tabernacle,” “angel,” “synagogue,” “centurion,” “wine”) are more specific or concrete and are normally rendered the same way throughout the Bible. Most of the important items of vocabulary in Matthew 25:31–46 are technical terms, but two key concepts appear in the first and last verses of this pericope: ‘glory’ (δόξα) in verse 31 and ‘eternal’ (αἰώνιον) in verse 46.

*Q: How would you translate ‘glory’ and ‘eternal’ in the Matthew 25 passage?*

*Can you think of other contexts in which you would use different terms (e.g., in 2 Cor. 3:7 where ‘glory’ has reference to the face of Moses and in Rom. 16:26 where ‘eternal’ has reference to God rather than to eternal life and eternal punishment as it does in Matt. 25:41)?*

But before one can come to grips with the wider referential world of the discourse, it is necessary to do an adequate background study of its situational context. This refers to the entire nonverbal *extralinguistic* setting in which the biblical document as a whole was authored, transmitted, received, and responded to (i.e., the political, economic, educational, artistic, sociocultural, philosophical, religious, and ecological milieu). How might the contemporary communication environment have influenced what was written (or not written), and how might it have affected the manner of writing?

At times it is possible to posit a particular setting of communication for a distinct pericope within a given book. Is that true for Matthew 25:31–46? Explain why or why not. The hypothetical situational context for this passage will be considered as we do our analysis of its crucial terms and concepts.

There is one important theological expression at the very beginning of this pericope.

*Q: What is this expression? To whom does this title refer?*

*What special significance is attached to this title in the Old and New Testaments?*

*Do a word study of this expression, using your study Bible, Translator's Handbook, Bible dictionary, and/or lexicon. Determine how it is to be understood here in Matthew 25:31.*

*Compare it to the following passages: Ezekiel 2:1; Daniel 7:13, 8:17; Mark 8:29–31; Revelation 1:13.*

By linking “the Son of Man” with “all the angels,” “sitting on the throne of his glory,” and “all the nations” (vv. 31–32a), Matthew evokes a certain *scenario* in the minds of the original audience. He has set a great stage (in literary narrative terms) for the twofold action that follows: first the “gathering,” then the “separating.” Who is doing the judging here (cf. Isa. 4:2) – what would have been the normal Jewish expectation? In this case, the royal Judge is earlier identified as the one who is speaking these words. And who is that?

*Q: Is the same judgement scene conceptually apparent to the consumers of your translation today?*

*Does it make any difference? If so, what can be done either within the text or alongside the text to help people to visualize, understand, and appreciate the momentous event that is taking place here, as recorded by Matthew?*

The magnificent royal throne-room scene shifts for a moment to a rural pastoral setting with the reference in verse 32 to a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats.

*Q: In literal terms with reference to an ancient Palestinian setting what practice is being carried out here?*

*How does this apply figuratively to the future situation that the Son refers to?*

*What symbolic associations were connected with sheep and goats by people living in the time of Christ? What connotations do these animals have in your social setting and oral or literary tradition?*

*What is the significance of “the right” and “the left” sides in ancient Near-Eastern culture? How does this compare with the meaning of “the right” and “the left” in your culture?*

At verse 34 a seemingly new participant enters the text; namely, the king. To whom does this refer and how do you know?

*Q: What does kingly imagery evoke in the minds of people who live in your sociocultural setting?*

*How can you make this reference to the antecedent “Son of Man” clear for your readers and hearers? What would a literal rendering of this messianic title mean to average non-Christians?<sup>24</sup>*

*Where does the conceptual metaphor RULING IS SHEPHERDING (see section 2.1) originate in the Bible? Cite several key passages in this regard.*

In the New Testament, Christ shifts the notion of RULING IS SHEPHERDING to LEADING (or CARING FOR) IS SHEPHERDING.

*Q: What's the difference? Cite several key passages to this effect.*

*Do such concepts transfer well to your language and culture? If not, do you need to qualify them within the translated text or paratextually? Explain.*

*What would the collocation of the three phrases “blessed of my father,” “inherit...the kingdom,” and “from the creation of the world” suggest to Christ's original audience?*

*Is this different from what it suggests to people who hear this promise today in YL? In other words, which people, at the time of Christ, considered themselves to be the “blessed”?*

---

<sup>24</sup> In Chichewa the literal expression “Son of Man” (*Mwana wa munthu*) refers either to the child of an African or, idiomatically, to some extraordinary fellow, a man who has just performed a strange or extraordinary feat (cf. *mwana wa mkazi* “child of a woman”).

*Why would perhaps even the disciples be shocked by Christ's announcement? (Recall who are gathered there before the throne in v. 32a.)*

**Note the sorts of activities and individuals mentioned in verses 35–36.**

*Q: How are corresponding persons and deeds viewed within the context of your culture?*

*To whom does Christ refer when he says "one of the least of these brothers of mine"? Why are such people singled out?*

*With whom are they being contrasted in general ancient Near-Eastern society?*

*Who then are "the righteous" of verse 37? What characteristics are associated with righteous people in your society?*

*Who are the "cursed" of verse 41?*

*What image does Christ conjure up for his audience when he says "eternal fire"?*

*Who "curses" people in your culture? Is it some evil person, such as a hateful individual or even a sorcerer?*

*Does a curse normally result in death or injury (according to popular belief)? In other words, could this passage be misunderstood in YL? If so, what kind of an explanatory footnote would clarify the intended meaning?*

*What would Christ's listeners think about the devil and his angels? Would they tend to fear them or not, and why?*

*How would their feelings and attitudes compare with those of people today in your religious setting?*

*What contrasting images did the phrases "eternal punishment" and "eternal life" in verse 46 evoke for the members of Christ's audience or readers of Matthew's Gospel?*

*How might this differ for the readers of your translation?*

*Do non-Christians know or use such expressions? If so, what do they mean by them?*

## **2.8 Step 8: Connect the cross-textual correspondences**

Step 8 is to look for prominent intra- and intertextual references and allusions that are embedded within the discourse, whether explicit or implicit.

From a literary as well as a thematic perspective, it is important to record all significant, topically related concepts and propositions that derive from either previously mentioned material within the same composition (*intratextual*) or from other texts (*intertextual*) that were likely to have been known to the original audience. The apparent purpose for such citations, paraphrases, allusions, and echoes (moving down from the most to the least noticeable within the text) then need to be ascertained. That is, were they used for reinforcement, validation, foregrounding, contrast, or further *logical-rhetorical development*? The same goes for any important cultural or religious symbols that may be discerned within the text, whether explicitly mentioned or only alluded to (cf. step 7).

Assuming that these different types of culturally based meaning were recognized by the original readers and hearers of the text at hand, the question arises, How can such semantic relevance be made apparent to our target audience today?

*Q: Are standard cross-references effective for most people?*

*Would there be a more helpful way of pointing out significant intra- and intertextual references? Explain.*

Look up the Scripture passages listed below and make a note of what sort of information has been alluded to “behind” the text of Matthew 25:31–46. Suggest what might be the rhetorical function of this rather heavy intra- or intertextual conceptual linkage. In other words, what special aspect of denotation or connotation is being appealed to and applied within the cognitive framework of Matthew’s judgement scene in this passage? The first two references have been complete as examples of how to proceed in digging beneath the surface of the discourse for elements of additional implicit meaning.

<b>verse</b>	<b>cross-reference</b>	<b>corresponding element(s)</b>	<b>their significance within Matthew 25:31–46</b>
31	Daniel 7:13–14; Zechariah 14:5	“Son of Man”	Matthew’s text (including v. 32) clearly alludes to Daniel’s Messianic vision, thus forging a crucial identity of reference involving “the Christ” – past and present.
31	Matthew 19:28	“on his (my) glorious throne”	Matthew 19:28 says that Christ’s followers (those who have left all for him) will also participate with him in judging the nations.
31	Matthew 13:37–43; 16:27; 24:31	“the (his) angels”	
32	Ezekiel 34:17; Micah 4:3; Malachi 3:18	???	
34	Matthew 18:23; 22:2; 27:11, 29, 37	“the king”	
34	Matthew 5:3–11; 23:38; 24:46	“blessed”	

34	Matthew 19:29	"inherit"	
34	Matthew 13:35	"the creation of the world"	
35–36	Isaiah 58:7	???	
40	Matthew 12:48–50; 23:8	"brothers"	
41	Isaiah 66:24; Matthew 5:22, 18:8	???	
46	Matthew 1:19; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1; 13:43; 23:28	"the righteous"	
46	Matthew 7:14; 18:8;  19:16; Daniel 12:2	"eternal life" + ???	

Note that some of these expressions are exactly the same in two or more passages:

*Q: What is the standard translation procedure that applies if the sense is the same in these places?*

*What if the sense is significantly different (e.g., "blessed" in Matt. 21:9 and 23:39)?*

*What can we do with those allusions that are clearly recognizable (by a biblically literate reader), but where the wording is not exactly the same?*

## **2.9 Step 9: Determine the functional and emotive dynamics**

Step 9 is to ascertain the main communicative functions and primary speech acts of the text, along with their associated emotive and connotative elements.

This is another way of examining the biblical text as a whole: It zeroes in on its individual and conjoined pragmatic (interpersonal) properties, again with the possibility of applying different degrees of specificity and shading. It builds upon the genre study of step 2 as well as our investigation of the text's rhetorical devices in step 5 and also benefits from the knowledge gained when carrying out the manifold discourse analysis of step 6. First, in step 9, the main communicative functions of the discourse are determined (e.g., informative, expressive, imperative, relational, esthetic, and ritual), and then the more specific *speech acts* as they occur in sequence, either in a monologue sequence or a dialogue exchange (e.g., speech acts that encourage, comfort, rebuke, condemn, appeal, certify, authorize, and inform). In addition, any strong connotative elements (i.e., emotional and attitudinal overtones) that are expressed during the act of "speaking" need to be taken note of, for these non-semantic elements also need to be represented, *if possible*, in a *LiFE*-like translation.

Study the verses listed below and identify the principal speech act that is represented in each, as well as any strongly felt emotions or attitudes which the speakers seem to be expressing along with their words. Certainly in any oral presentation of this pericope (and any other one composed primarily of direct discourse) vocal qualities would have to be represented as an integral part of the text. In some languages certain non-semantic lexical features must also be included in order to properly reproduce these personal, attitudinal aspects of human speech (e.g., exclamations or interjections, honorific or pejorative terms, and deictic particles), without which the text would sound very flat and unnatural. The first example has been completed as an illustration of the analytic method desired.

<b>verse</b>	<b>primary speech act</b>	<b>accompanying attitude(s) and emotion(s)</b>
25:34	invitation	sincerity, delight, enthusiasm
25:35		
25:37		
25:40		
25:41		



25:43		
25:44		
25:45		

No matter how the text of Matthew 25:31–46 is classified in terms of genre, it is clear that the point of the end times discourse is not primarily *informative* – to reveal and explain the earth-shaking events that will transpire at the end of time. Rather, it is *imperative* – intended through Christ’s visionary account to motivate here-and-now ethical behavior. Thus what we have is not simply a descriptive narrative intended to instruct the audience; instead, it is a vivid pastoral appeal calculated to encourage attitudes and actions that befit “the righteous” who enter into eternal life (25:46). This identification of the central communicative purpose leads us to a consideration of certain prominent rhetorical features that help set the scene and animate the Lord’s graphic portrayal of his post-*parousia* judgement activity.

By virtue of the naturally prominent narrative device of *end stress*, the burden of this private instruction to his disciples would seem to be Christ’s dramatic exhortation to put their professed faith into practice as a life-long habit of acts of loving assistance on behalf of “the least” of the Lord’s brothers (25:40, 45; cf. 22:34–40). This is where real “kingdom of heaven” work begins (25:1, 14), and this is the evidence which Christ the king will testify for – or against – in the judgement. Thus “salvation” for the righteous is initiated in this earthly life, being manifested by selfless deeds of “service” (25:44). This implicit encouragement (or warning, as the case may be), though set within a particular historical setting, is timeless in its persuasive relevance and potential application to any individual or audience in attendance.

*Q: Would you agree that this pericope builds up to a peak of intensity at the very end in terms of both form and content?*

*How do verse 40, 45, and 46 relate thematically to each other?*

*What are some of the key emotive elements that contribute to this progression of intensification?*

*Is this development apparent in your translation? If not, what can be done, whether textually or paratextually, to call attention to it?*

It is interesting to observe that this deceptively simple account reflects aspects of all three of the so-called “species” of classical Greco-Roman rhetoric: The surface of the text reveals certain *judicial* as well as *epideictic* concerns; that is, it seeks to influence the audience with regard to a right versus wrong legal standard as well as an honorable versus dishonorable value system. However, the message’s real import is *deliberative* in nature: it is intended to convince listeners concerning the expediency of specified beneficial behavior in contrast to detrimental actions in view of a future day of public reckoning.

Give an example of a passage or expression within this pericope that conveys each of these rhetorical motivations.

- a. **Judicial** – a precise judgement of right or wrong: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. **Epideictic** – an appeal to what is praiseworthy or shameful: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. **Deliberative** – a concern for the beneficial as opposed to what is harmful: \_\_\_\_\_

The artfully composed discourse structure of this challenging pericope is obviously being used as a persuasive (rhetorical) device. The literary style is thus enhanced as a means of shaping and sharpening the intended message so that it will have the greatest possible impact, upon *listeners* in particular. It may thus be viewed as a macrotextual equivalent of the “A, and what’s more, B; not only A, but B” type of parallel patterning that characterizes biblical poetry (with discourse panel I of the Greek text displayed at the beginning of section 13.6 corresponding to “A” and panel II to “B”). As our examination of the original text would indicate, this passage could be classified as an instance of *oratorical prose*, being marked by stylistic features such as rhythmic utterances, alliteration, balanced syntactic patterns, figurative language, conclusion-focused interrogatives, and incorporated direct speech.

The question now is, *To what extent* can this prominent artistic and rhetorical dimension be reproduced in a contemporary translation? This leads to the final step in preparing the ground for a *LiFE*-style translation.

## 2.10 Step 10: Coordinate form-functional matches

Step 10 is to collect, categorize, and prioritize all potential correspondences between the SL and TL, and then prepare a provisional translation of the pericope or complete book.

This final stage involves a selective listing of all *form-functional matches* – whether confirmed, pending, or just possible – that have been identified during the preceding steps. This would be based on a prior survey of all distinctive and frequently used artistic and rhetorical features of the TL that are available for rendering those of the biblical document. If *both* textual form and function can be matched across languages, so much the better; often, however, the function of a particular SL device will have to be reproduced by a different TL form. The aim is to keep the divergence in such cases as small as possible, even though at times only a complete *reformulation* will do. The compositional inventory might well include suggested biblical texts and representative samples to which the designated TL literary/oratorical genres and their related stylistic features could apply.

These different devices then need to be classified and catalogued for future reference. An electronic “dictionary file,” database, or some other categorized retrieval system should be created and continually updated with new and revised artistic and rhetorical data entries as the project continues. Even as the exegetical procedures are being conducted with reference to the biblical text, translators can begin to consider their possible translational implications. Important questions and issues that pertain to form (style, structure), content, and function should be thought of in terms of how they might be handled in the TL, especially from a *LiFE* perspective.

Step 10 is probably the hardest of all the steps to carry out because it requires that translators begin to think in the TL even as they are analyzing SL language forms. It is perhaps best to carry it out in two separate stages: one with an emphasis upon inventorying the chief SL literary forms and their assumed communicative functions, and the other with a corresponding emphasis on discovering close literary/oratorical equivalents in the TL, in keeping with the particular genre of literature in focus.

Following the analysis of a biblical text according to the set of procedures considered up to this point, the initial translation of it may be done in several ways. A relatively literal rendition would be the easiest to get the compositional process moving. This literal draft can later be

enlivened by appropriate literary devices in a relevant, functionally equivalent manner. The opposite approach would be to have a literary artist compose a complete genre transformation at the outset, that is, prepared intuitively according to the closest functional model text type in the TL oral or written tradition. This draft could then be sharpened exegetically with reference to the SL text at a later time. Many variations of these two approaches might be applied instead, depending on what is most efficient and effective for the translation team. In most cases, however, the first draft should be prepared by a single experienced translator, rather than by a team trying to patch concepts and texts together as a committee.

*Q: What operational procedures does your translation team or committee follow to carry out its work, from researching the target language and literature/orature through the initial draft stage and on to polishing the final pre-publication document?*

*Do you have any practical revisions or modifications to suggest with respect to the preceding ten steps of analysis?*

*What can be done to stimulate and encourage the vernacular creativity and resourcefulness of translators when rendering the biblical text?*

This is often a rather difficult thing to do, even in the case of gifted verbal artists. Could it be that they are intimidated by the critical eyes of biblical scholars or pastors on the review committee who may be prejudiced in favor of some other, more foreignized translation? If so, what can be done to resolve the situation?

### **3.0 “Who is this king of glory?” (Ps. 24:8, 10): Preparing a poetic analysis and translation of Psalm 24—A guided self-study**

The following is another extended example of how to apply a Literary-Structural analysis to a biblical text and its translation, with reference now to Psalm 24.

*How to recognize and reproduce the “glories” of a biblical psalm—12 steps:*

The following set of **twelve procedural guidelines** (each headed by a *keyword*) offers one possible literary-structural analytical methodology aimed at an eventual Bible translation. These *form-functional* considerations may be modified of course to meet the circumstances and end needs of users. The term “**glories**” in the heading above refers to the patent poetic features (*structural, artistic, and rhetorical*) that we will be paying special attention to during this **analysis**, with a view towards composing a corresponding **translation** type in your mother tongue (or revising some standard English version). Periodic analysis questions appear along the way (marked by ➔); those who are doing this exercise as a self-study should try to answer them first on their own, before reading the expository notes that follow.

➔ *As you proceed in this self-study, make a listing of any **critical comments** or **questions** that you may have with regard to **methodology** and/or **interpretation** and, when you have completed your work, forward these to the present author (erwendland@Gmail.com).*

### 3.1 Read

***Read the original (Hebrew) text aloud and prepare a literal initial (base) translation.***

If you cannot read the Hebrew text of Psalm 24, try *several different English translations* instead, e.g., ESV, NIV, GNT, and NLB (i.e., two more formal and two more idiomatic versions).

➔ *Consider the following issues (to be investigated in more detail later); suggested points of interest are given (in smaller print) for preliminary discussion:*

**3.1.1** *What are the **main ideas** and **key terms** of this psalm? Do you see any inter-connections?*

A clear focus on Yahweh, the “glorious king”—his wonderful attributes and righteous worshipers

**3.1.2** *How “**poetic**” does the text **sound**? Cite 2 examples of lyric, psalmic features that you note (either in the original text or shining through the translation).*

Initial “creation language”; leading RQs to initiate strophes; a call for worship of Yahweh; liturgical strophic repetition

**3.1.3** *Did you notice any potential **peaks** (theme) or **climaxes** (emotion) within the psalm?*

Peak: v. 5b-6, Identification: a characterization of God’s holy people.

Climax: v. 10b-c, Praise the identification of their Sovereign King!

**3.1.4** *Identify some potential translation **problem points** in terms of form and/or meaning. (Start thinking how to handle these in a poetic manner in your version.)*

v. 2b: ocean currents/earth’s foundation; 6b: “O (God of) Jacob”; 10b: YHWH Tsebaoth

**3.1.5** *What general **type** of psalm is this—praise, lament, trust, thanksgiving, or another?*

Most obviously, in general, a royal psalm in praise of Yahweh the glorious King!

[See the Hebrew text below, set out in **poetic lineation** and accompanied by my own, moderately free English translation presented for your critique.]

### 3.2 Variants

***Do a text-critical analysis to determine the principal variants and readings.***

Again, if you do not read Hebrew, the major English versions or exegetical commentaries that you consult will point out where these “**variants**” (*slightly different Hebrew texts*) or “**readings**” (*different translations for the same Hebrew text*) occur.

➔ *Pick out and consider several of these that appear in Psalm 24 (cf. the New English Translation):*

- v. 4—Heb. “who does not lift up for emptiness my life.” The first person *pronoun* on נַפְשִׁי (nafshiy, “my life”) makes little sense here [*possibly a reference to Yahweh’s “name”?*]; many medieval Hebrew mss support the ancient versions in reading a third person pronoun “his.” The idiom “lift the life” here means to “long for” or “desire strongly.” In this context (note the reference to an oath in the following line) “emptiness” probably refers to speech [*better: “idols, idolatry”*] (see Ps. 12:2).
- v. 2b—Some manuscripts have a *perfect* verb [*k-w-n*] “he established it [*fem. sg. => ‘earth’?*]” instead of MT’s *imperfect* form (יְכֹנֶנֶה), which is normally translated by a non-past tense; but the latter is probably correct—an instance of “poetic variation” since the corresponding verb in line A (2a) is perfect.
- v. 6b—MT reads: “your face, O Jacob”; my translation assumes the addition of an *implicit* “God of”, which has limited support from several Hebrew and LXX mms.; cf. Ps. 75:9 (10). [implied by the suffix ‘him’ at end of 6a].
- v. 9b—MT reads: “and lift up!” (*active imperative*) instead of the corresponding *passive* as in v. 7b.; emending the passive to an active verb is supported by several Heb. mss. and all the ancient versions; cf. NET/MT: “Rise up, you eternal doors!”. Hebrew poetic usage would support not only the graphic personification here but also the stylistic variation in the verb forms.  
[*Note: in Heb., ‘lift up the head’ can also mean “rejoice”.*]

### 3.3 Context

*Study the cotext and the extratextual setting (“context”) of the psalm.*

➔ *Do a background study of Ps. 24 (cf. an exegetical commentary or study Bible) and list three important contextual facts that you have discovered about this psalm.*

The three clear-cut sections of this psalm (A: 1-2, B: 3-6, C: 7-10; see evidence below) seem to point to a **composite** piece, that is, a psalm that was composed by King David (or one of his appointed musicians or tradition-bearers) from several other extant **liturgical** lyrics in order to formulate this now unified hymn in praise of the royal Lordship of Yahweh (A + C), including a distinctive stanza in the middle which describes those who alone are fit to worship such a great Creator-King (B). Form critics often designate section B as a liturgical “**entrance hymn**” for

*pilgrims* and C as a corresponding entrance hymn invoking or inviting the *Ark/YHWH* to enter the Temple (2 Sam. 6:12-19).

➔ *Next consider the psalm's co-text (surrounding psalms, especially those that precede it in the Psalter): Do you see any significant intertextual connections (correspondences and/or contrasts)? List the most important of these in your opinion—the application of “**canon criticism**”:*

**Psalm 24** follows topically from **Psalm 23** since it elaborates on the theme of *YHWH's earthly abode* (“the house of the LORD”) introduced at the end of Psalm 23. Ps. 23 focuses upon Yahweh as the personal Protector of his people and the various “blessings” that they receive from his hand (cf. 24:5a), while Ps. 24 features Yahweh as their glorious, all-powerful Creator and King and summarizes the characteristics of those who are “righteous” before him (23:3/24:5). **Psalm 25** is another psalm of trust (cf. 23) based on the theological assumptions of Ps. 24 (cp. 24:4 – 25:1).

On the next page you will find a poetic display of Psalm 24 along with a function-oriented English rendering, which may be critically evaluated as part of the overall analytical study of this text. The different shades of gray and underlines indicate repeated sounds and words that may be significant markers within the text (*for you to determine!*).

➔ *Note any significant differences between the English translation below and two or three standard versions. Record any suggested improvements or corrections that you would like to make.*

### 3.4 Genre

*Determine the primary genre and sub-genres of the text.*

➔ *What is a genre? (Note etic vs. emic classifications; cf. *Analyzing the Psalms*, ch. 3.)*

This was done in a preliminary sort of way in step one; now it is time to try and be more specific: Does Psalm 24 manifest a “pure” genre, or does it seem to be “mixed” (especially in the case of longer psalms)? The five “major” functional “types” are: ***petition*** (lament), ***thanksgiving*** (eulogy), ***praise*** (hymn), ***instruction*** (homily), ***profession*** (creed). There are also five “minor” types: ***repentance*** (penitential), ***remembrance*** (historical), ***retribution*** (imprecatory), ***royalty*** (panegyric), and ***liturgy*** (liturgical).

➔ *How would you classify Psalm 24 in terms of genre and sub-genre? Give reasons.*

A Davidic psalm:

The earth is Yahweh's and everything in it;

To him belong the world and all who live in it.

For he is the one who over the seabed established dry land;

yes, over the deep ocean currents he laid earth's foundations.

Who then may ascend the mount where Yahweh dwells?

Who may worship there in that holy place of his?

Only *those* whose hands are clean and whose hearts are pure.

Only *those* who do not devote themselves to lies;

only *those* who do not make false oaths or promises.

Only *they* will receive a blessing from Yahweh;

yes, *they* will be vindicated by *their* Savior-God.

*These are* the folk who really want to worship him;

*they* desire to know **you** (God of) Jacob personally.  
*A-men!*

So fling wide the gates of his abode,

let those ancient doors be opened up—

so that the glorious King may enter there!

Just who is this glorious King?

None other than Yahweh, the mighty Warrior;

yes, it is Yahweh, ever victorious in battle!

Quick, fling wide the gates of his abode,

let those ancient doors be opened up—

so that the glorious King may enter there!

I say, who is this glorious King?

None other than Yahweh, the Commander-in-chief;

he is our most glorious King! *A-men!*

1 לְדָוִד מְזִמּוֹר

לַיהוָה הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאֶתָּהּ  
תִּבְלֵ וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ:

2 כִּי־הוּא עַל־יָמִים יִסְדָּתָהּ

וְעַל־נְהָרוֹת יִכּוֹנְנָתָהּ:

3 מִי־יַעֲלֶה בַּהֵר יְהוָה

וּמִי־יָקוּם בַּמָּקוֹם קָדְשׁוֹ:

4 נָקִי כַפַּיִם וְבֵר־לֵבָב

אֲשֶׁר | לֹא־נִשְׁאָ לַשָּׁוְא נַפְשִׁי  
וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה:

5 יֵשֶׁא בִּרְכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה

וְצִדְקָתָהּ מֵאֵלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ:

6 זֶה הַדּוֹר \*הַדֶּרֶשׁוּ (הַדֶּרֶשׁוּ)

מִבְקָשֵׁי פָנֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:

7 שֹׁאוּ שַׁעְרִים | רֹאשֵׁיכֶם

וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם

וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ תְּכַבֹּד:

8 מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ תְּכַבֹּד

יְהוָה עֲזִיז וְגִבּוֹר

יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה:

9 שֹׁאוּ שַׁעְרִים | רֹאשֵׁיכֶם

וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם

וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ תְּכַבֹּד:

10 מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ תְּכַבֹּד

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

הוּא מֶלֶךְ תְּכַבֹּד סֵלָה:

This text is obviously a psalm in **praise** of Yahweh (a “hymn”), namely, of the **royalty** (“kingship”) subgroup. It is also **liturgical** (participatory/interactive) in nature, as suggested by its larger patterns of repetition, namely, the *question-answer* format of vv. 3 + 4-6, and the

reiterated hortatory strophes of vv. 7-8 + 9-10 (both *BASE* [question/appeal] → *RESPONSE* [proclamation] in terms of propositional relations). This psalm would be most appropriate for use at the onset of a public worship service—whether at the time of David or in the modern day.

### 3.5 Linguistics

*Do a close lexical and syntactic study (via an interlinear text if necessary), e.g., verbal constructions and sequences, word-order variations—topic and focus, specialized/technical vocabulary or morphology, accent/rhythm patterns, non-verbal predications, independent pronouns.*

→ Do you notice anything **unusual** or **noteworthy** with regard to the vocabulary and grammatical structures of Psalm 24, for example, the marked Hebrew word order in v. 2, or the full pronominal forms in v. 10, and their possible significance in the text?

- Verse **1b** is a *verbless* predication (an acclamation), emphatically leading off with the *divine name*.
- **1c** is a parallel *verbless* utterance with another implied *existential* predicate ('to be') + *ellipsis* (to YHWH).
- **2a**: *kiy* + the *personal pronoun* again foregrounds "Yahweh", with additional focus through *constituent fronting* on the locus of his creative activities—the "seas", which were feared by Israel and regarded as divinities by many early ANE peoples (the constituent focus is reiterated in v. 2b).
- The *verbless* predication of **4a** not only makes explicit the answer to the preceding RQs (v. 3), but it also foregrounds the *ethical* qualities (not only the ritual requirements) of the person thus designated as fit for worship (holy in hands and heart!). This same basic structure, coupled with the initial deictic "this" reinforced by *asyndeton*, is found in v. 6 with corresponding rhetorical effect.
- The *asyndeton* of **5a** helps to mark the topical shift from personal characteristics (v. 4) to consequent blessings from Yahweh (v.5), i.e., *grounds—conclusion*. [or: Reason/Result?]
- Deliberate (or poetic) *ellipsis* (?) in **6a**, i.e., "O [God of] Jacob," marks stanzaic *closure* (B).
- The *asyndeton* of **7a** combined with an *imperative* form signals a textual *aperture*.
- *Repetition* of the phrase "the King of glory" in vv. **7c** and **8a** foregrounds the referent, which is then specified by the repeated mention of YHWH in **8b** and **8c**.
- *Asyndeton* and *clause initial* placement in vv. **8b-c** further spotlights the divine referent—"Yahweh"!
- The inserted independent *personal pronoun* ("he") in vv. **10a** and **10c** again serves to draw attention to the referent, "the King of Glory", who is identified specifically in **10b** and "the LORD of Hosts"; the shortened medial line B is thereby also emphasized.
- The pair of *selah*'s at the end of vv. **6** and **10** further mark these as points of strophic *closure*.



### 3.6 Disjunction

**Posit the major “break-points” in the text, i.e., where noteworthy “shifts” of form or content occur—e.g., in time, place, speaker, action type, mood, cast of participants, etc.**

➔ *Where are the principal breaks in Psalm 24, and what is the evidence/markers for each?*

- Stanza/strophe **A<sub>1</sub>** (v. 1a): the psalm’s *title*, followed in 1b by a *verbless clause* and an *initial* reference to *YHWH* that duplicates the syntactic structure of the first line (the title).
- Stanza **B<sub>1</sub>** (v. 3a): *shift in topic* (from *YHWH* to his people)—but *continuity* is also indicated by repeated mention of the divine name (*anaphora*); the *RQ* acts as a “leading question”, i.e., one that introduces the main topic or theme of the following discourse unit—the attributes of the “who” being asked about.
- Stanza **B<sub>2</sub>** (v. 5a): *asyndeton*; *shift* from specification of character to that of blessing (a weak/minor break); a shift to direct address marks a strong *closure* at 6b (after the psalm’s lexical midpoint in 6a).
- Stanza **C<sub>1</sub>** (v. 7a): *shift in topic* (back from the genuine, sincere worshiper to his/her God—*YHWH*); *imperative* form—the first in this psalm, plus a *personified vocative* (“you gates” = the people who are fit to dwell in the holy city/place of Yahweh, i.e., those specified in stz. B).
- Stanza **C<sub>2</sub>** (v. 9a): exact *repetition* of v. 7a (*anaphora*).

➔ *What is the point and purpose of a paragraph/strophe/stanza break?*

This step is important in terms of demarcating the text’s paragraph structure (note the diversity among the standard English versions). This sequence of disjunctions forms an overall [**A-B-A’**] “ring structure” in which stanzas A and A’ focus on *Yahweh* while B describes *people* who worship him aright.

### 3.7 Repetition

**Plot the patterns of repetition (exact) and recursion (synonymous), both proximate and remote (i.e., near and far “parallelism”).**

➔ *Do this for Ps. 24, and posit a primary **structure-functional purpose** for each of the main sequences and patterns of repetition/recursion that you have identified.*

- The repeated synonymous *constituent focus* (fronted) constructions of **2a-b** help (somewhat) to distinguish the *closure* of the psalm’s short initial stanza/strophe (**A**).
- A pair of synonymous *RQs* (each beginning with “who?”) in **3a-b** mark the *onset* of stanza **B**. They resonate with the non-adjacent reiterated *RQs* of **8a** and **10a**, which appear *medially* in strophes **C<sub>1</sub>** and **C<sub>2</sub>**.

- Strophes **C**<sub>1</sub> and **C**<sub>2</sub> are almost (but significantly, not quite!) identical (all verses are tri-cola), which suggest that they serve as psalmic “set pieces” of some sort in a worship liturgy (e.g., leader > choral/congregational response).

### 3.8 Poetic rhetoric

*Identify the text’s main poetic (artistic) and rhetorical (emotive) features, especially where concentrations or clusters occur (e.g., RQs, hyperbole, personification, figurative language, idioms, irony/sarcasm, word-pairs, close reiteration, vocatives, exclamations, sound-plays—puns, alliteration, assonance, etc.).*

Ps. 24 is obvious poetry, with many literary (artistic-rhetorical)-structural features that are typical of Hebrew verse forms in general and the psalmic *hymn* genre in particular:

➔ *What important poetic features did you notice in this psalm?*

- Lineal **parallelism** – tight bi- and **tri-cola** (vv. 4, 7-10)
- Lexical **balance** – 43 words before/after the significant midpoint in 6a—Yah’s “generation” of upright folk (can “stand” in his holy place!)
- Poetic **word pairs**, e.g., 1 (polemical: earth/world), 5 (a promotional pair: blessing/vindication-deliverance)
- Lexical **repetition** – other than that constituted by parallelism, e.g., (not) ‘lift up’ [n-s-’] in 4b/5a and 7, 9, thus forming a *cohesive link* between sections B and A’.
- **Figurative language**, e.g. 8—*metaphor*: Yahweh/warrior King, 7/9—*personified apostrophe*: command to the “heads” to “lift up the gates”!
- Strophic structure with **refrains**, e.g., 7-8/9-10 [~ “A and what’s more\*, B” parallelism; \* “more” in terms of poetic beauty and intensity]
- Ellipsis/**gapping**, e.g., 1c, 5b
- **Thematic questions** – “Who...” is God (vv. 8a, 10a – A, A’); who is the God-fearing (wo)man (3a-b – B)?  
*NB—the characterizing Q&As of 3/4, 8, 10 are undoubtedly uttered by different speakers!*
- *Intertextual* (psalmic and historical) and *extratextual* (mythic, royal) **allusions**, e.g., YHWH as the Warrior King, Deliverer of his people (Exod. 15:6-12; 1 Sam. 17:45); paraphrases of precepts of the Mosaic Covenant (‘emptiness’ v. 4—idolatry, Exod. 20:4; cf. Ps. 73:1,13; ‘generation’ v. 6, cf. 73:15). Note also the textually-related *expansion* of B in Ps. 15!
- **Alliteration/assonance**, e.g., 3b-4, 7/9
- Utterance **rhythm**, e.g., v. 9, with a break in the pattern at 10b with emphasis on YHWH *Tsebaoth* (the “throne name” of YHWH, cf. Isa. 6:5; Pss. 84:1, 3; 89:5-14)

➔ Find several instances of where these poetic and rhetorical devices tend to co-occur in Ps. 24 and indicate their apparent literary and/or structural functions within their respective contexts. How does the translation in YL deal with these significant forms? Suggest some improvements.

These features, especially the clusters, primarily serve to help mark **strophic boundaries** (aperture/closure) and **peak** or **climax**, especially when they co-occur with significant elements of linguistic form (cf. #5), e.g., v. 7: asyndeton + imperative + vocative + personification + alliteration. Also note the reduction in literary impact and appeal when these poetic features are removed w/o replacement (see examples of this in the CEV).

The results of the distinct analyses of each strophe (*combine to form “stanzas”*) may be then combined in **synthesis** to produce a unified structure for the text as a whole. In this case, the evidence mutually supports the hypothesis of Psalm 24 as consisting of **three stanzas** (A: 1-2, B: 3-6, A': 7-10), in which A and A' have the same theme and purpose (praise Yahweh for his creative greatness and magnificent majesty), while the middle stanza B presents a thematic *counter-point*, i.e., who is worthy enough to worship such a wonderful God—to be citizens of ('stand' in) the Kingdom of the “glorious King”? (ANS: *those who serve Him with pure hearts and righteous lives, not dishonoring the LORD through idolatry or false speaking.*)

Verses 1-2 thus establish a *conceptual frame of reference* for the entire psalm: The focus will be on Yahweh—who he is and what he has done/does. This segment of a “Creation Hymn” evokes (by *synecdochic [part-whole]* association) the entire genre and sets the semantic stage, so to speak, for what follows in the text. This hymn is at once *universal* in scope, but also *individual/personal* in application. Yahweh, the glorious Creator-Warrior of his people [*transcendence*], wants to come close to minister to them [*immanence*] in the twofold blessing of “deliverance” and “vindication.” However, “David” also reminds listeners of their moral and religious responsibility in their Covenantal relationship with the LORD, namely, to “seek after” Him in purity of heart, life ('hands'), lips (no 'deceit'), and worship (no 'nothingness' – i.e., idolatry; cf. Ps. 31:7; Jer. 18:5). The relational attributes of a glorious, life-giving God (YHWH) must be duplicated in the characteristics of his holy, life-offering people.

### 3.9 Discourse

***Make a study of principal communicative functions of the text at hand.***

This may be carried on in more detailed fashion by means of a speech-act analysis (*illocution—locution—perlocution*, i.e., utterance intention—action—result) on the micro-level of “discourse”

(the analysis of texts composed largely or entirely of direct speech). Check on the degree to which your functional analysis complements your prior linguistic and literary analyses.

→ *Propose the primary communicative functions of the main structural divisions of Psalm 24, i.e., vv. 1-2, 3-7, and 8-10; give reasons for your analysis. Which is the most important “speech act” of this psalm, and why do you say so?*

- 1-2: **informative**: a confessional assertion of what Yahweh has done—creation (with **polemical**-imperative undertones: versus ancient near eastern pagan Canaanite cosmology and mythology [the adversarial chaos of ‘sea/rivers’])
- 3-6: **imperative**: exhortation to worship Yahweh aright (holy thoughts and lives) plus motivation blessing-vindication) – (an implicit **didactic**-informative function in that v. 4b refers to commandments of the Decalogue, namely, 1/2 and 8[9]). Christ may have had v. 4 in mind as he uttered the Beatitudes, especially the key terms “blessing” and “righteousness” (cf. Mt. 5:6, 10).
- 7-10: **expressive**: joyous words of praise for Yahweh, the mighty King of glory!

In terms of specific **Speech Acts** we observe the following in vv. 4-6: a pastoral *description* of + *exhortation* for Yahweh’s people (marked by line-final divine names, word pair involving “blessings”): interrogation (or “attention-getter,” 4) + information (“identification,” 5) + promise (“blessings,” 6) + confirmation (“encouragement,” 7). Verse 10 is clearly an act of *proclamation* + *praise*, that is, of the people’s Great King Yahweh! (= *the “macro”-speech act?* – note the formal marking by means of pronouns and the divine name). We also note the complex figurative (metonymic) **communicative cycle** of 7-8 (9-10): “gates” = gatekeepers = Temple religious ministers of Yahweh (priests/Levites). “Lift up...” would appear to be words uttered (shouted out?) by the people/pilgrims/worshipers), to which the priests respond, “Who is...”; the people then proclaim the name of the LORD: “YHWH of Armies...glory!”

### 3.10 Outline

*Outline the psalm in terms of its major divisions and topics (“theme and parts”).*

This step helps one to organize the various principal themes in relation to the major structures of a particular book or pericope (note the application to sermon/Bible study).

→ *Evaluate these two outlines of Psalm 24; then make your own alternative proposal (note the relevance for positing a **Section Heading**. Do this in the light of proposed titles such as these: “The Great King” [GNT] and “Who can enter the Lord’s Temple?” [CEV]):*

Expository:

*Ps. 24—YAHWEH IS THE KING OF GLORY,  
With respect to:*

*A. His overall creation (vv. 1-2); [transcendence]*

*B. His holy people (vv. 3-6); [obedience]*

*C. His victorious power (vv. 7-10). [immanence]*

Hortatory:

*PRAISE YAHWEH THE KING OF GLORY,  
On account of:*

*A. His overall creation (vv. 1-2);*

*B. His holy people (vv. 3-6);*

*C. His victorious power (vv. 7-10)!*

### 3.11 Translate

*In the light of 1-10, translate this psalm, whether more or less “literarily”, in view of a particular audience and an appropriate setting of use (to be specified).*

On the next page is a sample Chewa rendition in a “poetic” *ndakatulo* (expressive lyric, *LiFE*)-style of compositional format, along with a relatively literal English back-translation.

➔ *As you read through the text, pick out three form-content features of this poetic translation that you find interesting, or which you would like to query as to how/why they are used. Perhaps the English is not clear or seems to go to far in comparison with what the original text seems to allow for.*

*Salmo limeneli n’la Davide mfumu ija.  
Chauta ndiye adalenga dziko lapansi  
pamodzi n’zonse zam’menemo, inde,  
anthu onse okhalamo nawonso ndi ake.  
Ndiye amene adaika dzikoli pa nyanja,  
adalikhazika pamtsinje wozama ndithu.  
Ndani kodi angalimbe mtima kukwera,  
kufika paphiri la Chauta, m’malo oyera,  
ndikumupembedza moyenera kumeneko?  
Ndi amene amachita zabwinotu m’manja,  
amene amaganiza zoyera zokha m’mtima.  
Ndiye amene sakonda kulingalira zoipa;  
sanama kapenanso kulumbira monyenga.  
Zoonadi, iyeyo adzalandiradi madalitso,  
inde, mphatso kwa Chauta Mpulumutsi.  
Mulungu mwini ndiye adzamuteteza,  
adzagamula kuti alibe mlandu uliwonse.  
Anthu otere ndiwo amafunitsitsa Chauta,  
amadzam’pembedza Mulungu wa Yakobe.*

*This psalm is one of David the king.*

- 1 Chauta (Yahweh) is the one who created the earth along with everything in it, yes indeed, all those who live in it are his as well.
- 2 He’s the one who set that earth upon the sea, he established it upon the very deep river surely.
- 3 Just who can get up the courage to climb up, to reach the peak of Chauta, the holy place, and to worship him properly there?
- 4 It is someone who does good deeds with his hands, who thinks only pure things in his heart.  
It is the person who doesn’t like to ponder evil; he does not lie nor does he swear falsely.
- 5 To be sure, that one will really receive blessings, yes, gifts from Chauta the Savior.  
God himself will defend him,  
He will judge him to be without any case to answer.
- 6 All such folk are the ones who seek after Chauta, they always come to worship the God of Jacob.

Choncho, kankhani zipata zamzinda wake; nonsenu, tsekulani zitseko zake zolimbazo, kuti Mfumu yaulemerero wonse iloŵemo. Nanga Mfumu yaulemerero ndi yani? Palibe wina wanyonga ndi wamphamvu, koma Chauta ngwazi wathu ndiye amene! Inu nonse, kankhani zipata za mzindawo, zitseko zimenezo zikhale zotseguka tseku! kuti Mfumu yaulemerero wonse iloŵedi. Nanga Mfumu yaulemerero ndi yani? Ndi Chauta Mphambe wamphamvuzonse. Ndiye Mfumu yaulemerero wamuyayaya!	7 8 9 10	So then, push open the gates of his city; all of you, open those mighty doors of his so that the King of all glory might enter inside. Now who is that glorious King? There's no one else so strong and powerful, except Chauta, our mighty warrior, he's the one! All of you, push open the gates of that city, Let those mighty doors be open—wiide! so that the most glorious King should enter. Well, just who is that glorious King? He is Chauta of Storms all-powerful. He is the King of glory—the everlasting one!
--	-------------------	--

➔ *How then do major English translations, past and present, fare in reproducing the dynamic poetry (the “glories”) of the Hebrew original? Evaluate the versions that you read through in step 1 and rate them poetically: Which was the most/least “poetic” and why [give reasons]?*

➔ *Do you know of any “literary” or “poetic” translations in languages other than English? If so, briefly describe this version and why you consider it to be “poetic”.*

Competent, well-trained translators can (should?) be able to do better in their effort to convey or reproduce the memorable compositional manner and message of the poetry of Scripture. We also need to remember that the biblical text must be **understandable** to and **appreciated** by the target audience not only via the medium of **print** alone, but also through the dynamics of **sound**. Was not Psalm 24, for example, composed to be *recited* or *sung* in the first instance? If this is true (the assertion may be debated), what are the practical implications for Bible translators today?

➔ *Now prepare your own literary rendition of Psalm 24 (as a “lovely lyric”), either in English or some other TL that you are familiar with (in the latter case, give a back-translation as above). Point out three of the significant features that manifest the dynamic poetic quality of your translation.*

*(If possible [the ideal goal!], compose a “singable” or recitable version that you might perform for the class. Perhaps only one stanza will be possible in the time available.)*

Furthermore, with regard to the overall meaning of this psalm, we must also ask ourselves: Can the significance of the biblical poet’s theological message and communicative purpose be sufficiently understood on the basis of the translation alone, that is, without a supplied **cognitive context** (“frame of reference”) which can facilitate its interpretation?

➔ *Pick out two aspects of Psalm 24 relating to its form and/or meaning that would benefit from a **descriptive-explanatory footnote**—and then compose what you would regard to be suitable samples in English for a particular audience/setting (to be specified).*

- For example: with respect to ANE mythology/cosmology and view of the world in vv. 1-2, or the pilgrim/entrance liturgy in vv. 7-10.

### 3.12 Test

*Test and critically evaluate your draft translation on the basis of specific target audience responses and a directive, feature-oriented questionnaire.*

➔ *What methods have you used to test a translation of yours, especially a poetic one? (If you have never done this before, what would you suggest as possibilities in this regard?)*

➔ *Next, study, apply, and critically evaluate—that is, with a view toward improvement—the following methodology (based on Wendland 1985; the latter may then be compared with the additions proposed above at the beginning of ch. 8):*

We may distinguish four key criteria of **quality**, two that have to do with the *source* language and two that have to do with the *target* language (ranked in rough order below):

1. **Fidelity** (*with a focus on the **meaning of the SL text***): A Bible translation should accurately transmit what we presume (based on a thorough prior text analysis) that the original author intended to communicate to his readers/hearers. This includes emotive impact/response as well as content.
2. **Intelligibility** (*with a focus on **meaningfulness of the TL text***): The original message must be conveyed in such a way that it is understandable to the average person, without causing undue difficulty or confusion with regard to its style and diction.
3. **Naturalness** (*with a focus on the **naturalness of the TL text***): Ideally, the translated text should not sound like a translation, like a foreign document (except for certain aspects of its content). Whenever possible, it should be “idiomatic,” relatively easy to read, well-sounding in the vernacular, and manifesting language that is as *beautiful* and *powerful* as that of the original text.
4. **Closeness** (*with a focus on the **form of the SL text***): It is important to remain faithful, that is, as proximate as possible to the historical context and culture of the Bible, in one way or

another, i.e., either within the translation itself or through the use of supplementary helps like footnotes (cf. “When literalness is idiomatic...”).

Focus	Meaning	Form
Source language	<b>Fidelity</b> 1 ↓	4 <b>Closeness</b> ↑
Target Language	<b>Intelligibility</b> 2 →	3 <b>Naturalness</b>

No single factor can be considered in isolation. Thus, where any two of these criteria are in conflict, SL text **fidelity** is of utmost importance, followed by **intelligibility**; **naturalness** in the TL takes the third place, and last, but not least (nor to be ignored) comes **closeness**. The overall aim is to produce a translation that is **acceptable** in all relevant respects by the intended target group and one that will be readily, even eagerly, used—*ideally sung!*—by them.

➔ How would you propose testing your translation draft with respect to these 4 criteria? Suggest a practical methodology to try out in the field, including a critique of the approach suggested above.

➔ Having completed your analysis and translation of Psalm 24, do you think that any procedural step has been overlooked or not specified clearly enough in the guidelines suggested above? If so, feel free to contribute your additions, corrections, or proposed modifications.

➔ What are the main translation PPPs (“potential problem points”) that you noted in Psalm 24? List three of these and suggest how you would propose resolving these in YL.

- E.g., “LORD of Hosts” — “climb YHWH’s hill” — “lift up the nephesh to” — “clean hands” — “seek your face” — “selah” — “generation”? How about the Q&A structure involving different speakers?

➔ Do you agree with critical comments that accompany (in parentheses) the CEV’s rendering of Psalm 24? You may correct these and propose your own improvements to this translation (through v. 10).

**Who Can Enter //the [Lord]’s Temple? (CEV)** (*shifts the main focus of the Psalm—away from Yahweh*)

1 The earth and everything on it, (this first sentence is very prose-sounding, not at all “poetic”!)  
including its people,  
belong to the [Lord].

The world and its people (repetitious without enough poetic variation)  
belong to him.

2 The [Lord] placed it all (rather awkward in style)  
on the oceans and rivers. (a reduction—two poetic lines collapsed into one)

3 Who may climb the [Lord]’s hill **a** (difficult to understand the intended meaning)  
or stand in his holy temple? (why just “stand” there—what’s the point?)

4 Only those who do right



for the right reasons,                   (unclear—too ambiguous/prosaic expression—what about the “heart” attitude?)  
and don't worship idols  
or tell lies under oath.

5 The [Lord] God, who saves them,       (poetic lines [form], but not poetic expression! dramatic DS removed!)  
will bless and reward them,  
6 because they worship and serve (the sentence length is prosaic; in poetry each verse should be a complete utterance)  
the God of Jacob. **b**  
7 Open the ancient gates,                   (a stanza break is missed—is this a mistake in the published format?)  
so that the glorious king  
may come in.

8 Who is this glorious king?  
He is our [Lord], a strong  
and mighty warrior.

9 Open the ancient gates,  
so that the glorious king  
may come in.

10 Who is this glorious king?  
He is our [Lord],  
the All-Powerful!

---

\*24.1 1 Co 10.26.

\*24.4 Mt 5.8.

a24.3 the [Lord] 's hill: The hill in Jerusalem where the temple was built.

b24.6 worship ... Jacob: Two ancient translations; Hebrew “worship God and serve the descendants of Jacob.”

→ Have a class discussion on the application of a LiFE-approach to translating Ps. 24 (or any of the lyric texts in this book) in your language: What were your main challenges—your successes—your failures? What needs to be done to promote such a literary/oratorical style of translating in your translation team—or among the constituency for whom you are translating?

→ Finally, having carefully examined Ps. 24 inside and out, as it were, how would you react to the following assertion regarding Ps. 24:7-10: “[It is] a fragment or remnant of a descent myth—a myth in which a high god, forsaking his ordinary domain, descends to the netherworld, where he must confront the demonic forces of the infernal realm”<sup>25</sup> What arguments for or against this interpretation can you think of? Does this make any difference with regard to the translation of this psalm? [Discussion question]

---

<sup>25</sup> Alan Cooper, “Ps 24:7-10: Mythology and exegesis,” *JBL* 102 (1983), p. 43.

## 4. Analyzing and translating Haggai

Begin your study of the prophet Haggai by carefully reading through the RSV and GNT translations that are reproduced in the boxes below. You will be comparing these two English versions with each other and also with a translation in your language (YL) as an essential part of your study of this book. In doing so, you will also learn how to ask questions of the text as a way of more fully investigating its intended meaning in preparation for translation. The original Hebrew text (MT) is given in sections under each portion of Haggai being examined; this will be occasionally referred to for the sake of those who can read it (*chapter 5 of this book may also be consulted before, after, or while doing this exercise*).

RSV	GNT
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>*A new prophetic speech formula begins at v. 3.</p> <p><sup>1</sup> In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, <sup>2</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts: This people say the time has not yet <u>come to rebuild the house of the LORD.</u>" / * <sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, <sup>4</sup> "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? <sup>5</sup> Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages</p>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>The LORD's Command to Rebuild the Temple</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup> * During the second year that Darius was emperor of Persia, on the first day of the sixth month, the LORD spoke through the prophet Haggai. The message was for the governor of Judah, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and for the High Priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The LORD Almighty said to Haggai, "These people say that this is not <u>the right time to rebuild the Temple.</u>" / <sup>3</sup> The LORD then gave this message to the people through the prophet Haggai: <sup>4</sup> "My people, why should you be living in well-built houses while my Temple lies in ruins? <sup>5</sup> Don't you see what is happening to you? <sup>6</sup> You have planted much grain, but have harvested very little. You have food to eat, but not enough to make you full. You have wine to drink, but not enough to get drunk on! You have clothing, but not enough to</p>

<p>earns wages to put them into a bag with holes.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. <sup>8</sup> Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may appear in my glory, says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> You have looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourselves each with his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hills, upon the grain, the new wine, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all their labors.”</p> <p><sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared before the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, “I am with you, says the LORD.” <sup>14</sup> And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, <sup>15</sup> on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month.</p>	<p>keep you warm. And workers cannot earn enough to live on. <sup>7</sup> Can't you see why this has happened? <sup>8</sup> Now go up into the hills, get lumber, and rebuild the Temple; then I will be pleased and will be worshiped as I should be.</p> <p><sup>9</sup> “You hoped for large harvests, but they turned out to be small. And when you brought the harvest home, I blew it away. Why did I do that? Because my Temple lies in ruins while every one of you is busy working on your own house. <sup>10</sup> That is why there is no rain and nothing can grow. <sup>11</sup> I have brought drought on the land—on its hills, grainfields, vineyards, and olive orchards—on every crop the ground produces, on people and animals, on everything you try to grow.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The People Obey the LORD's Command</b></p> <p><sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the people who had returned from the exile in Babylonia, did what the LORD their God told them to do. They were afraid and obeyed the prophet Haggai, the LORD's messenger. <sup>13</sup> Then Haggai gave the LORD's message to the people: “I will be with you—that is my promise.” <sup>14</sup> The LORD inspired everyone to work on the Temple: Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah; Joshua, the High Priest, and all the people who had returned from the exile. They began working on the Temple of the LORD Almighty, their God, <sup>15</sup> on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was emperor.</p>

<sup>1</sup> In the second year of Darius the king, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, <sup>2</sup> "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, <sup>3</sup> 'Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your sight as nothing? <sup>4</sup> Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, <sup>5</sup> according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit abides among you; fear not. <sup>6</sup> \* For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; <sup>7</sup> and I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup> The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.'"

<sup>10</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, <sup>11</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests to decide this question, <sup>12</sup> 'If one carries holy flesh

### **The Splendor of the New Temple**

<sup>1</sup> On the twenty-first day of the seventh month of that same year, the LORD spoke again through the prophet Haggai. <sup>2</sup> He told Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, to Joshua, the High Priest, and to the people, and to say to them, <sup>3</sup> \* "Is there anyone among you who can still remember how splendid the Temple used to be? How does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all. <sup>4</sup> But now don't be discouraged, any of you. Do the work, for I am with you. <sup>5</sup> \* When you came out of Egypt, I promised that I would always be with you. I am still with you, so do not be afraid.

<sup>6</sup> \* "Before long I will shake heaven and earth, land and sea. <sup>7</sup> I will overthrow all the nations, and their treasures will be brought here, and the Temple will be filled with wealth. <sup>8</sup> All the silver and gold of the world is mine. <sup>9</sup> The new Temple will be more splendid than the old one, and there I will give my people prosperity and peace." The LORD Almighty has spoken.

### **The Prophet Consults the Priests**

<sup>10</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the second year that Darius was emperor, the LORD Almighty spoke again to the prophet Haggai. <sup>11</sup> He said, "Ask the priests for a ruling on this question:

in the skirt of his garment, and touches with his skirt bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does it become holy?" "The priests answered, "No." <sup>13</sup> Then said Haggai, "If one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered, "It does become unclean." <sup>14</sup> Then Haggai said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, says the LORD; and so with every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. <sup>15</sup> Pray now, consider what will come to pass from this day onward. Before a stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the LORD, <sup>16</sup> how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. <sup>17</sup> I smote you and all the products of your toil with blight and mildew and hail; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD. <sup>18</sup> Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider: <sup>19</sup> Is the seed yet in the barn? Do the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree still yield nothing? From this day on I will bless you."

<sup>20</sup> The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, <sup>21</sup> "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, <sup>22</sup> and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their

<sup>12</sup> Suppose someone takes a piece of consecrated meat from a sacrifice and carries it in a fold of his robe. If he then lets his robe touch any bread, cooked food, wine, olive oil, or any kind of food at all, will it make that food consecrated also?"

When the question was asked, the priests answered, "No."

<sup>13</sup> \* Then Haggai asked, "Suppose someone is defiled because he has touched a dead body. If he then touches any of these foods, will that make them defiled too?"

The priests answered, "Yes."

<sup>14</sup> Then Haggai said, "The LORD says that the same thing applies to the people of this nation and to everything they produce; and so everything they offer on the altar is defiled."

### **The LORD Promises His Blessing**

<sup>15</sup> The LORD says, "Can't you see what has happened to you? Before you started to rebuild the Temple, <sup>16</sup> you would go to a pile of grain expecting to find twenty bushels, but there would be only ten. You would go to draw fifty gallons of wine from a vat, but find only twenty. <sup>17</sup> I sent scorching winds and hail to ruin everything you tried to grow, but still you did not repent. <sup>18</sup> Today is the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, the day that the foundation of the Temple has been completed. See what is going to happen from now on. <sup>19</sup> Although there is no grain left, and the grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced, yet from now on I will bless you."

### **The LORD's Promise to Zerubbabel**

<sup>20</sup> On that same day, the twenty-fourth of the month, the LORD gave Haggai a second message <sup>21</sup> for Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah: "I am about to shake heaven and earth <sup>22</sup> and overthrow

riders; and the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his fellow. <sup>23</sup> On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealti-el, says the LORD, and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts."	kingdoms and end their power. I will overturn chariots and their drivers; the horses will die, and their riders will kill one another. <sup>23</sup> On that day I will take you, Zerubbabel my servant, and I will appoint you to rule in my name. You are the one I have chosen." The LORD Almighty has spoken.
--	---

#### 4.1 Exercises—Haggai as a whole

- a) After reading the two translations above, work through the Introduction to the book of Haggai in the NIV Study Bible (NIV-SB, pages 1425-26) in order to gain some **background knowledge** about the setting of this prophecy from the LORD. *To whom* was Haggai writing and *why* was he writing to them? What was the *religious situation* that called forth this "Word from Yahweh"? **Summarize** the message of Haggai to the people of his day. Mention *three* main things (or more) that you discover in your background reading—facts that probably influenced the divine messages that Haggai had to deliver to his people, as well as their ultimate collection in this prophetic book.
- b) Evaluate the following quote, which speaks to the controversial issue of the writing—and subsequent editing—of Haggai's prophecy in relation to its original oral transmission; give your opinion on the matter: "Specialists seem extraordinarily hesitant regarding the prima facie likelihood that the prophets were their own editors. A man conscious of being the vehicle of the word of God will not, in a literary age, leave those words to the uncertainties of oral transmission or to the less informed care of other hands. There is no compelling argument against the view that Haggai—and who better?—was his own editor" (Motyer 1998:967-968).
- c) Now study Haggai in the RSV again (in comparison with the GNT) and *draw a line through* the RSV text before each verse where you propose that a **new paragraph** begins. The first division has been made for you. Normally, a new paragraph begins in literature where there is a **shift in content** of some type—e.g., to a *different* speaker(s), addressee(s), chief actor, time, place, topic (or point of an argument), genre (type of discourse), and so forth. The more shifts that occur at the same point, the more likely a new section of the text begins at that place and the more important

it is. Along the side of the text, by each line of division that you draw, list the various breaks that you notice there (also note accompanying prophetic **formulas** and discourse **transitions**).

- d) It is important to distinguish **major breaks** in the text from *minor* ones. How do you do that? It is a matter of evaluating the types of break or shifts that you find at a particular point in the discourse. *How many* are there and *how prominent* are these, relatively speaking? Go through the RSV text again and try to pick out where you think that the major (**section**) breaks occur. Draw *two lines* through the text in these places, or mark the text with a felt-tip marker of a certain color.
- e) Normally in modern Bible translations it is common to find a **section heading**, or title, at the beginning of each major break in the text. You have seen these in the GNT translation above. Propose such a title for each of the major sections of Haggai that you have designated. You may use any GNT title if you wish (also see the NIV-SB), or you may improve what is given; you may also need to put headings at any major sections where the GNT does not have one.
- f) After you have prepared a section heading at each major break in the text of Haggai, you may move to the next level down and propose a *sub-title* that summarizes the content of every paragraph that you have indicated in the text. Write this out on a separate piece of paper. This will give you a **topical outline** of the contents of the book as a whole. Now *compare* your outline with that given in the NIV-SB (p. 1426) and any other study Bible that you have available. After this, you may wish to *revise* your own general outline of the book of Haggai.

RSV	Haggai	1:1-2	GNT
			<p><b>The LORD's Command to Rebuild the Temple</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup> * During the second year that Darius was emperor of Persia, on the first day of the sixth month, the LORD spoke through the prophet Haggai. The message was for the governor of Judah,</p>
	<p><sup>1</sup> In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, governor of Judah, and to</p>		

Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, <sup>2</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts: This people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD.”	Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and for the High Priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.  <sup>2</sup> The LORD Almighty said to Haggai, “These people say that this is not the right time to rebuild the Temple.”
---	--

בְּשָׁנָת שְׁתַּיִם לְדִרְיֹנָשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁשִׁי בְּיוֹם אֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָה דְּבַר-  
יְהוָה בְּיַד-חַגִּי הַנָּבִיא אֶל-זֶרְבָבֶל בֶּן-שְׁאֲלִיָּאל פָּתַח יְהוּדָה וְאֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
בֶּן-יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל לֵאמֹר: <sup>2</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר הָעַם הַזֶּה  
אָמְרוּ לֹא עַתָּה בָּא עַת-בֵּית יְהוָה לְהַבְנוֹת: פ

#### 4.2 Exercises—Haggai 1:1-2

- What links these first two verses together as a **separate paragraph**? In other words, what shift or break in content do you note in verse 3 that leads you to begin a new paragraph (or section) at that point? Or perhaps you would prefer *not* to make a break at v. 3; if that's the case, give your reason(s).
- Compare the RSV and GNT translations and point out a *major* difference (not simply a different word) that you see between them. Can you explain why the GNT starts a *new sentence* within v. 1 and again at v. 2? What is the special difficulty that the RSV presents you with, which is typical of the prophetic literature, especially at the beginning of a major section? How can you deal with it?
- How does the GNT render the phrase: “the word of the LORD (= LORD/Yahweh) came by [the hand of] Haggai” (הָיָה דְּבַר-יְהוָה בְּיַד-חַגִּי)? Which version do you prefer to follow in your language (YL) and why? However, you must remember that you are dealing with a **prophetic formula** that normally *marks the beginning* of an oracle from Yahweh to the people, whether a word of condemnation and judgment or of blessing and salvation. Therefore, it is good if you can find a distinctive way of signaling this same *discourse function* in YL. What would you suggest in this case?



- d) Who does the word “LORD” (יְהוָה) refer to? Explain the meaning of this **key term**. How do you translate this *divine name* in YL (e.g., Chewa: *Chauta*)? How does it differ from “God” (אֱלֹהִים)?
- e) What is a “prophet” (נָבִיא)? How do you translate this important term in YL? Evaluate this translation—is it adequate, or can you suggest a better word or phrase? Explain your answer. Carry out the same exercise for the **technical terms** “governor” (פֶּתַח) and “high priest” (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל).
- f) Who was the “high priest”—“Joshua” or “Jehozadak”, and how do you know this? How can you translate so as to make this relationship clear in YL? [NOTE: Whenever you are asked to express something in “your language”, YL, be sure to also give a *literal* back-translation into English.]
- g) Should you translate “first day” as “Sunday” and “sixth month” as “June” in YL? Explain.
- h) How does the GNT translate “Thus says the LORD of Hosts” (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת)? This is another important **prophetic oracle opener** in the Hebrew Bible. What is the meaning of “hosts” in this *divine title*? (Check the NET, note 5, plus another study Bible or commentary.) How does the GNT render this title—and what is their justification (do you think) for doing so? How has “the LORD of Hosts” been translated in YL in the past? Evaluate the pros and cons of this translation—can a more accurate and meaningful expression be found?
- i) Why does Yahweh quote the people in v. 2—what is the rhetorical purpose of this *incriminating quote*? Do the people of YL debate in this manner, by citing a contentious or objectionable statement by the opponent(s)? If not, how could you render this verse to make its intention clear?
- j) “These people” (lit., ‘this people’ --הָעָם הַזֶּה)—not “my people” (cf. Isa. 6:9-10): What is the **connotation** (feeling, attitude) of “these” in this context? How would you convey the same sense of *estrangement* in YL? Can you use a demonstrative pronoun as the Hebrew does? Explain.

k) How does the GNT translate the phrase “house of the LORD” (בֵּית יְהוָה)? Which of these two renderings do you prefer in YL and explain why?

RSV	Haggai	1:3-11	GNT
<p><sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, <sup>4</sup> “Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? <sup>5</sup> Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. <sup>8</sup> Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may appear in my glory, says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> You have looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourselves each with his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hills, upon the grain, the new wine, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all their labors.”</p>		<p><sup>3</sup> The LORD then gave this message to the people through the prophet Haggai: <sup>4</sup> “My people, why should you be living in well-built houses while my Temple lies in ruins? <sup>5</sup> Don't you see what is happening to you? <sup>6</sup> You have planted much grain, but have harvested very little. You have food to eat, but not enough to make you full. You have wine to drink, but not enough to get drunk on! You have clothing, but not enough to keep you warm. And workers cannot earn enough to live on. <sup>7</sup> Can't you see why this has happened? <sup>8</sup> Now go up into the hills, get lumber, and rebuild the Temple; then I will be pleased and will be worshiped as I should be.</p> <p><sup>9</sup> “You hoped for large harvests, but they turned out to be small. And when you brought the harvest home, I blew it away. Why did I do that? Because my Temple lies in ruins while every one of you is busy working on your own house. <sup>10</sup> That is why there is no rain and nothing can grow. <sup>11</sup> I have brought drought on the land—on its hills, grainfields, vineyards, and olive orchards—on every crop the ground produces, on people and animals, on everything you try to grow.”</p>	

<sup>3</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה בְּיַד־חַגִּי הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר: <sup>4</sup> הֲעַתָּ לָכֶם אֲתֶם לְשֹׁבֵת בְּבֵתֵיכֶם סְפוּגִים וְהַבַּיִת תֵּנוּהָ חָרָב: <sup>5</sup> וְעַתָּה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שִׁימוּ

לְבַבְכֶּם עַל־דִּרְכֵיכֶם: <sup>6</sup> זְרַעְתֶּם תְּרֵבָה וְהִבֵּא מַעֲט אֶכּוֹל וְאִין־לְשַׁבְּעָה  
 שְׁתּוּ וְאִין־לְשַׁכְּלָה לְבוֹשׁ וְאִין־לֶחֶם לֹא וְהִמְשַׁתְּפָר מִשְׁתַּפָּר אֶל־צָרוֹר  
 נָקוֹב: פ <sup>7</sup> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶּם עַל־דִּרְכֵיכֶם: <sup>8</sup> עָלוּ הָהָר  
 וְהִבַּאתֶם עֵץ וּבְנוּ תִבְיֹת וְאַרְצָה־בוּ \*וְאָכְבֹּד (וְאָכְבָּדָה) אָמַר יְהוָה: <sup>9</sup>  
 פָּנָה אֶל־תְּרֵבָה וְהִנֵּה לְמַעַט וְהִבַּאתֶם תִּבְיֹת וְנִפְחַתִּי בּוֹ יַעַן מָה נָאֻם יְהוָה  
 צְבָאוֹת יַעַן בֵּיתִי אֲשֶׁר־הוּא תָרֹב וְאַתֶּם רָצִים אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ: <sup>10</sup> עַל־כֵּן  
 עָלִיכֶם כָּלֵאוּ שָׁמַיִם מָטָל וְהָאָרֶץ כָּלֵאָה יְבוּלָהּ: <sup>11</sup> וְאֶקְרָא חָרֹב עַל־  
 הָאָרֶץ וְעַל־הַהָרִים וְעַל־הַדָּגָן וְעַל־הַתִּירוֹשׁ וְעַל־הַיִּצְהָר וְעַל־אֲשֶׁר  
 תּוֹצִיא הָאָדָמָה וְעַל־הָאָדָם וְעַל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְעַל־כָּל־יִגִּיעַ כַּפִּים: ס

#### 4.3 Exercises—Haggai 1:3-11

- a) Compare the RSV and GNT translations above with the NIV and NET with regard to the **discourse structure** of this section covering verses 3-11; point out the major *differences* among these four versions. Then suggest where you would put *paragraph breaks* in this unit and give reasons for each of the breaks that you propose.
- b) Why should we begin a major new section at v. 12—what is the *evidence* for this break? On the other hand, do you feel that section 1:3-11 should be divided up to include another major division (e.g., NET)? Tell why or why not. Also explain the importance of paying attention to this larger compositional aspect of the biblical text that you are translating into YL.
- c) Which words found in v. 1 are repeated in v.3? What do you think is the rhetorical *function* of this **repetition**? Does it serve the same communicative purpose in YL? Explain.
- d) What is being referred to by the expression “paneled houses” (בִּבְתֵּיכֶם סְפוּגִים) in v. 4? (See the NET and the NIV-SB notes on this verse.) How would you translate this phrase meaningfully in YL?

- e) What sort of a question do we have in v. 4? What is the function of this type of question here? What point does it serve to *emphasize*? What personal *emotion(s)* does it also express? Can you use a **rhetorical question** (RQ) in YL for this same purpose—that is, to convey the same forcefulness and feeling? Explain.
- f) Why does the RSV add “yourselves” after “you” (Heb., לָכֶם אַתֶּם)—is this not *redundant*? How does the GNT convey this added emphasis, or contrast? How would you do it in YL?
- g) What does “lies in ruins” mean (הָרַב – only one word in Heb.)? Note the **position** (location) of this word in the clause/sentence/verse: what is the significance of this *word order*? How would you convey this whole idea naturally in YL?
- h) How does the GNT translate the expression “Consider how you have fared” (RSV—Hebrew: עֲשִׂימוּ לִבְבְּכֶם עַל־דִּרְכֵיכֶם) in v. 5? How do these translations relate to one another—are they saying the same thing? Explain. This is an **idiomatic** utterance in Hebrew (see the NET for a literal translation); do you have a *corresponding* idiomatic way of saying this in YL?
- i) What is the LORD’s point in v. 6—what is he trying to impress upon the people with this set of 5 short *contrastive* statements? Does a *literal* translation convey the same effect in YL? If not, what can you do to achieve **functional equivalence** with your rendering? Is a **cross reference** to a passage like Deut. 28:38-39 (Lev. 26:20) necessary here? Explain why (or why not).
- j) What is the meaning of putting one’s wages “into a bag of holes”? Do you have a similar *idiom* or *proverbial* saying in YL? If so, could it be used here? Why was all this happening to the people—what was the underlying problem (see the NIV-SB not at 1:6)?
- k) How does v. 7 compare with v. 5—do you notice any *difference*? Why does Yahweh repeat himself here; in other words, what is the rhetorical function of the *repetition* in this type of prophetic discourse?

- l) How does the GNT differ from the RSV in the handling of this verse with regard to the discourse structure? Which version do you think is more correct and why (cf. NIV and NET at this point)?
- m) Why does GNT begin v. 8 with “Now...” – what is the sense or function of this *transitional adverb*? Do you need a corresponding word or phrase in YL? Explain.
- n) The *quotation* in v. 8 contains 5 main verbs and it is important to discern how they relate to one another so that the *same relationships* are evident in your translation. There are two verbs of command: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; one verb of purpose: \_\_\_\_\_; and two verbs of result: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blanks).
- o) Was the rebuilt Temple to be constructed of wood? What does your translation imply? Do you need an *explanatory footnote* to clarify this issue? If so, suggest what you would write:
- p) How does GNT render the RSV’s “that I may appear in my glory” (only one word in Heb.—אֶפְתָּה־)? Which interpretation do you prefer and why (check commentaries)?
- q) Which words found in v. 8 has the GNT left un-translated? Can you suggest why it does this? What would you suggest doing in YL and why? Note that the Hebrew **prophetic punctuator**, literally translated as ‘says Yahweh’ (אָמַר יְהוָה) – cf. ‘utterance of Yahweh’ (נְאֻם יְהוָה) in v. 9, may add a certain degree of *emphasis* to the preceding utterance or verse. How could you express this same bit of forcefulness idiomatically in YL?
- r) Verse 9 develops the ideas presented in which earlier verse? Point out the lexical and semantic **parallels** between verses 5-6 and 7-9.
- s) In the first line of v. 9, the GNT first adds a word and then leaves one out in comparison with the RSV translation: Which word is *added* and suggest why? Which word is *omitted* (in Heb. it is הִנֵּה)? Should the latter word be ignored? What is its rhetorical *function* in Hebrew and how can you reproduce that in YL?

- t) What is the meaning of “[and] I blew it away” (וַיִּפְּחֶהָ) (see also the NET note)? Can you use a similar idiom or **figure of speech** in YL here? Try to find one!
- u) Instead of the single *interrogative* word “why” (יַעַן מָה) in v. 9, what does the GNT say? Is this necessary also in YL?
- v) The Hebrew has another idiom for “while you busy yourselves each with his own house”—which is literally, ‘and each of you runs to his house’ (וַאֲתֶם רָצִים אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ). Do you have an *idiom* that can serve as an *equivalent* here? What *speaker attitude* is implicitly conveyed in v. 9?
- w) Instead of “Therefore” (עַל־כֵּן), what does the GNT have? What type of *logical relationship* does this **conjunction** indicate? What is the equivalent indicator in YL?
- x) In v. 10, what does the GNT translate in place of “[from] dew” (מִטֶּל)? Which translation is more accurate? Explain. Is dew thought to come from “the heavens” (שָׁמַיִם) in your **cultural setting**? Does your dew have the same function as in Palestine (see the NIV note)? Explain. How will you render this part of v. 10?
- y) Point out the **poetic parallelism** in v. 10. What special function might this literary feature have here? This parallel phrasing is lost in the GNT. Can you retain it with similar *impact and appeal* in YL? If so, tell how you would do this.
- z) Mention three notable *differences* between the RSV and GNT translations of v. 11. Tell which version you prefer in each case and tell why.
- aa) What was the *cultural significance* of “the grain, the new wine, the oil” (וְעַל־הַדֶּגֶן וְעַל־וַיִּנְיָ וְעַל־הַיֵּצֶהָר) in Bible times (cf. Deut. 7:13)? Why is the Hebrew preposition “on” (עַל) repeated so often—what does this *repetition* emphasize?
- bb) How did “the drought” (חֶרֶב) adversely affect “all the labor of [the peoples’] hands” (כָּל־יָדָיו כָּפָה)? In what sense is this final expression sort of a **climax** to the LORD’s

speech of *rebuke*? How can you duplicate this same *import*, *impact*, and *connotative effect* in YL?

RSV	Haggai	1:12-15	GNT
<p>12 Then Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared before the LORD. 13 Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, says the LORD." 14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month.</p>		<p><b>The People Obey the LORD's Command</b></p> <p>12 Then Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the people who had returned from the exile in Babylonia, did what the LORD their God told them to do. They were afraid and obeyed the prophet Haggai, the LORD's messenger. 13 Then Haggai gave the LORD's message to the people: "I will be with you—that is my promise." 14 The LORD inspired everyone to work on the Temple: Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah; Joshua, the High Priest, and all the people who had returned from the exile. They began working on the Temple of the LORD Almighty, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was emperor.</p>	
<p>12 וַיִּשְׁמַע זְרֻבָבֶל וְיִשְׁמָעֵל בְּנֵי־שְׁלֹתָיָאֵל וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְכָל שְׂאֲרֵית הָעָם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְעַל־דְּבָרֵי חַגִּי הַנָּבִיא כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה: 13 וַיֹּאמֶר חַגִּי מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה בְּמַלְאֲכוֹת יְהוָה לָעָם לֵאמֹר אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם נָא־יְהוָה: 14 וַיַּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ זְרֻבָבֶל בֶּן־שְׁלֹתָיָאֵל פָּתַח יְהוָה וְאֶת־רוּחַ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְאֶת־רוּחַ כָּל שְׂאֲרֵית הָעָם וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ מִלְאָכָה בְּבֵית־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם: 15 בַּיּוֹם עֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בִּשְׁנֵי בִשְׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לְדָרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ:</p>			

#### 4.4 Exercises—Haggai 1:12-15

- a) Why is it appropriate to put a *section heading* before v. 12? Can you suggest a better title than that found in the GNT?
- b) Compare the GNT with the RSV and indicate what the former leaves out in comparison with the latter. Does the *repetition* of the RSV sound all right in YL, or is it confusing or stylistically awkward? What might be the rhetorical purpose of such reiteration in this context?
- c) How does the GNT translate “and all the remnant of the people” (וְכָל | שְׁאֲרֵית הָעָם) found in the RSV? What does the expression “the remnant” refer to here (see the NET note)?
- d) How does the GNT render RSV’s obeyed “the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet” (וְעַל־דְּבָרֵי חַגִּי הַנְּבִיא) (בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם)? Does the RSV sound strange if rendered literally in YL? Explain.
- e) Where does GNT get the words “the LORD’s messenger” from (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה – cf. v. 13)? Do you distinguish this expression from the term “the prophet” (הַנְּבִיא)? Explain. Does it sound good to transfer this phrase to v. 12, as the GNT has done? Explain.
- f) What does the expression “and the people feared [from before] the LORD” (וְהָעָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה) mean in this context (see the NIV)? Do you have an *idiomatic* way of saying this in YL? Is there any added aspect of meaning in the phrase “their God” (אֱלֹהֵיהֶם)—why is “their” there!?
- g) Do you need to break up the single *long sentence* of v. 12 as the GNT has done? If so, explain how you would do this, and tell how the sentence then reads in YL.
- h) What is the meaning and *theological significance* of the LORD’s assertion “I am with you” (אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם) in v. 13 (cf. Gen. 26:3)? Evaluate the GNT rendering of these same words. Notice that they are followed by the “prophetic punctuator” (נְאֻם־יְהוָה)—how is it translated in the RSV? What is the *idiomatic* equivalent in YL? What do you think of GNT’s way of handling this?



- i) Point out three major differences between the translations of the RSV and the GNT in v. 14. Tell which version you prefer in each case, and give reasons why.
- j) Notice that the NIV begins a *new paragraph* at v. 13. Is there any justification for this? Explain why or why not. What about beginning a new paragraph at v. 14—would that be justifiable? Explain your choice in this matter. (Note the *parallelism* in form and content between vv. 12a and 14, as well as between vv. 12b and 15.)
- k) How does the GNT translate “YHWH stirred up the spirit of” (וַיַּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחִי) in v. 14? How would you render this idiomatic expression meaningfully in YL?
- l) Explain the difference that you see between the translations of the RSV and the GNT in v. 15. Which version does the NIV and the NET favor? Notice that v. 15 functions as the *temporal heading* for the section beginning in v. 12 and also forms a closing *inclusio* in parallel with v. 1.

RSV	Haggai	2:1-5	GNT
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup> In the second year of Darius the king, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, <sup>2</sup> “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of She-alti-el, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, <sup>3</sup> ‘Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your sight as nothing? <sup>4</sup> Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, <sup>5</sup> according to the promise that I</p>		<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>The Splendor of the New Temple</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup> On the twenty-first day of the seventh month of that same year, the LORD spoke again through the prophet Haggai. <sup>2</sup> He told Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, to Joshua, the High Priest, and to the people, and to say to them, <sup>3</sup> “Is there anyone among you who can still remember how splendid the Temple used to be? How does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all. <sup>4</sup> But now don't be discouraged, any of you. Do the work, for I am with you. <sup>5</sup> When you came out of Egypt, I promised that I would always be with</p>	

made you when you came out of Egypt.  
My Spirit abides among you; fear not.

you. I am still with you, so do not be  
afraid.

בְּשִׁבְעֵי בַעֲשָׂרִים וְאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּיַד־חֲנַי הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר: <sup>2</sup>  
אָמַר־נָא אֶל־זִרְבָבֶל בֶּן־שַׁלְּטִיאל פֶּתַח יְהוּדָה וְאֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק  
הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְאֶל־שְׂאֵרֵי הָעָם לֵאמֹר: <sup>3</sup> מִי בָכֶם הִנְשָׂאֵר אֲשֶׁר רָאָה אֶת־  
הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה בְּכַבּוּדוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן וְנָמָה אַתֶּם רֹאִים אֹתוֹ עַתָּה הֲלֹוא כְּמָהוּ כְּאֵין  
בְּעֵינֵיכֶם: <sup>4</sup> וְעַתָּה חֲזַק זִרְבָבֶל וְנָא־יְהוָה וְחֲזַק יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן  
הַגָּדוֹל וְחֲזַק כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ נָא־יְהוָה וַעֲשׂוּ כִּי־אָנִי אִתְּכֶם נָא־יְהוָה  
צְבָאוֹת: <sup>5</sup> אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַתִּי אִתְּכֶם בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם וְרוּחִי עִמָּדָת  
בְּתוֹכְכֶם אֶל־תִּירָאוּ: ס

#### 4.5 Exercises—Haggai 2:1-5

- What is the difference in the **time formula** that begins chapter 2 (v. 1) in the RSV and GNT translations (cf. question [1] above)? Which version do you prefer for YL and why?
- The remaining words of 2:1 are exactly the same as what you find in which other verse of Haggai? Why is it important for translators to take note of this *exact verbal correspondence*?
- Notice that the RSV does not actually make a *paragraph break* at the end of v. 5 as the GNT does (see the text given on pages 449-450). What are the arguments for and against putting a section break (and a section heading) at this point in the text? [NOTE: the Hebrew letter-marker ס at the end of v. 5 supports the break here.] What is the *structural evidence* then for starting a new major unit at v. 10? (All versions agree on this last division.)

- d) What important Jewish festival was being held at the time of year recorded in v. 1? How does this *historical fact* relate to the *theme* of the book of Haggai? Is this worth a **footnote**? Explain.
- e) Point out two major differences between the translation of v. 2 by the RSV and the GNT. Which version is a better **model** for the translation in YL and why?
- f) What is the **underlying implication** (implicit intention) of the first question of v. 3? What is the meaning of the RSV's rendering "in its former glory", which is a literal translation of the Hebrew (בְּכְבוֹדוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן)? Is an *explanatory footnote* needed here (cf. NET, NIV)?
- g) Do you have an idiomatic way in YL of expressing the 2<sup>nd</sup> *question* of v. 3 (וְנָמָה אֲתֶם ) רֹאִים אֹתוֹ עַתָּה – lit., 'how you [are] ones looking at it now')?
- h) How does the third *RQ* of 2:3 relate to the second one in meaning? What is the best way of rendering this added *emphasis* in YL? Would a cross-reference to Ezra 3:12 help your readers?
- i) What is the main difference between the RSV and the GNT translations at v. 4? Which translation would serve as a better model in YL? Tell why. Would you have to make some modifications in order to render the text more idiomatically in YL? Explain what you would do. How can you best deal with the reiterated *prophetic punctuator* – "says the LORD"?
- j) The word "yet/but now" (וְעַתָּה – lit. 'and now' – cf. 1:5, 2:15) signals that a *new stage* in the exhortation or argument begins at this point in the text. Do you have a special literary *marker* for that sort of discourse function in YL? If so, tell what it is.
- k) How would you express the three-fold command to "take courage!" (lit., 'be strong' חֲזַק) idiomatically, or using a figure of speech, in YL? What does the GNT do here in contrast to the RSV? Does the *repetition* serve an emphatic function in YL, as in Hebrew, or must you follow the *verbal reduction* exemplified by the GNT? Why is a *cross-reference* to 1 Chron. 28:20 needed here?

- l) Do you have an idiom to express the command to “work!” (lit., ‘do’ – וַעֲשׂוּ)? If so, would it be appropriate to use at this juncture? Explain.
- m) Point out the difference between the RSV and the GNT at the beginning of v. 5. Which is a more natural way of translating in YL? How do you say “according to” in YL?
- n) Who does “*you* [pl. – came out]” actually refer to? Does this affect your translation? Explain.
- o) In the Hebrew of v. 5, “promise” is literally ‘the word’ (הַדְבָּר) and “made” is literally ‘I cut’ (כָּרַתִּי). Do you have an idiomatic or figurative way of expressing the notion of “[firmly] promising” in YL? Can you use that expression here? Explain.
- p) How does the GNT translate “My Spirit abides among you” (וְרוּחִי עִמָּדְתָּ בְּתוֹכְכֶם – lit. ‘and my spirit [is standing] in/with you [pl.]’)? Should you refer to the “spirit” or not in this context? Check some reference works and explain your preference here (compare the NIV and NET notes).
- q) How does the *command* “fear not!” (אַל־תִּירָאוּ) compare in meaning to “feared the LORD” in 1:12—does the verb “fear” have the same meaning in each context? Explain your answer. If the sense is different here in 2:5, how would you express the correct idea in YL? Do you have an appropriate idiom to use in this place?
- r) What meaning does the little particle “so” have in the GNT? In other words, how do the clauses “I am still with you” and “do not be afraid” relate to each other logically? How do you express this same *semantic relationship* naturally in YL?

RSV	Haggai	2:6-9	GNT
<sup>6</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; <sup>7</sup> and I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of		<sup>6</sup> “Before long I will shake heaven and earth, land and sea. <sup>7</sup> I will overthrow all the nations, and their treasures will be brought here, and the Temple will be filled with wealth. <sup>8</sup> All the silver and gold of the world is mine. <sup>9</sup> The new Temple will be more splendid than the	

hosts. <sup>8</sup> The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.’ ”

old one, and there I will give my people prosperity and peace.” The LORD Almighty has spoken.

<sup>6</sup> כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עוֹד אֶחָת מְעַט הִיא וְאֲנִי מְרַעִישׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־הַחֲרֻבָּה: <sup>7</sup> וְהִרְעַשְׁתִּי אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וּבָאוּ חֲמֻדַּת כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וּמִלֵּאֲתֵי אֶת־הַבַּיִת תִּזְהַר כְּבוֹד אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: <sup>8</sup> לִי הַכֶּסֶף וְלִי הַזָּהָב נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: <sup>9</sup> וְגָדוֹל יִהְיֶה כְבוֹד הַבַּיִת תִּזְהַר הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן־הָרִאשׁוֹן אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וּבִמְקוֹם תִּזְהַר אֶתֵּן שְׁלוֹם נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: פ

#### 4.6 Exercises—Haggai 2:6-9

- Why does the GNT, in contrast to the RSV, (see actual published version) begin a new paragraph at v. 6? What is the structural support for this *division* of the text? Does a *major* section begin here? Explain your answer.
- What expression has the GNT left out of its translation of v. 6? Why do you think that they did this? Do you think that these words belong in your translation? Why or why not?
- What does the expression “Once again” (עוֹד אֶחָת) indicate about the events being referred to? How does the GNT translate these words? What do you recommend doing here in your translation? Does the *cross-reference* to Hebrews 12:26-27 influence your decision? If so, why?
- How would you translate “in a little while” (מְעַט הִיא – lit., ‘it [is] little’) so that it fits naturally in YL together with the idea of “once again”?
- What does the LORD mean by saying “I will shake” (וְאֲנִי מְרַעִישׁ) – what kind of a “shaking” is meant here, and how can you express this naturally, even idiomatically,

in YL? This is not a “distant future” tense in Hebrew, but an “*immediate* future”; can you put it this way in YL?

- f) Why are all these places mentioned: “the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land”? What special rhetorical significance is being conveyed? Do you have any difficulties in translating any of the terms underlined above? If so, explain what the problem is and how you propose resolving it in your translation so that the intended idea comes through both clearly and forcefully, as in the Hebrew?
- g) What is being “shaken” in v. 7? What verb does GNT use instead? Which verb (or perhaps a different one) is more appropriate in YL and tell why.
- h) How does NIV translate the word rendered “treasures” (תְּמִנִּתַּי) in RSV and GNT? How will you translate this word in YL? (See Isaiah 60:5, Malachi 3:1-4, and the note in the *New English Translation* [NET, [www.netbible.com](http://www.netbible.com)]))
- i) The NIV, RSV, and GNT also differ in their translation of another key term of v. 7— which one (Hebrew כְּבוֹד)? Which version do you prefer? (See the translation of this same term in v. 9.)
- j) Translate v. 8 in YL and then prepare a back-translation into English. How does the meaning of this verse relate to what has been said in v. 7? [*Always check how one verse links up with the preceding one because this may require certain specific transitional words or phrases in YL.*]
- k) Which words of v. 8 does GNT not translate? Is such a *deliberate omission* a good procedure in YL at this point? Explain why (or why not).
- l) What does “latter splendor” (RSV) mean or refer to? How does this rendering compare in meaning to that expressed by the GNT and NIV (see also the NET)?
- m) What does “this place” (מְקוֹם הַזֶּה) refer to? (Consult a commentary on this issue.) Can you leave the *reference ambiguous* in YL? Explain why (not).

- n) The GNT seems to add an extra *key term* in comparison with the RSV—what is that? There is only one word in Hebrew, namely, שָׁלוֹם – so which translation works better in YL? Refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary and explain the full sense and significance of the important thematic word “peace”.
- o) Why do you think that the expression “says the LORD of Hosts” is repeated in v. 9? (Note that they are slightly different in Hebrew: אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת and נֹאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת – do you *distinguish* these prophetic formulas in YL? Explain how—or why you do not make a difference.)

RSV	Haggai	2:10-14	GNT
<p><sup>10</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, <sup>11</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests to decide this question, <sup>12</sup> ‘If one carries holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and touches with his skirt bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does it become holy?’ ” The priests answered, “No.” <sup>13</sup> Then said Haggai, “If one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?” The priests answered, “It does become unclean.” <sup>14</sup> Then Haggai said, “So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, says the LORD; and so with every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.</p>		<p><b>The Prophet Consults the Priests</b></p> <p><sup>10</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the second year that Darius was emperor, the LORD Almighty spoke again to the prophet Haggai. <sup>11</sup> He said, “Ask the priests for a ruling on this question: <sup>12</sup> Suppose someone takes a piece of consecrated meat from a sacrifice and carries it in a fold of his robe. If he then lets his robe touch any bread, cooked food, wine, olive oil, or any kind of food at all, will it make that food consecrated also?”</p> <p>When the question was asked, the priests answered, “No.”</p> <p><sup>13</sup> * Then Haggai asked, “Suppose someone is defiled because he has touched a dead body. If he then touches any of these foods, will that make them defiled too?”</p> <p>The priests answered, “Yes.”</p> <p><sup>14</sup> Then Haggai said, “The LORD says that the same thing applies to the people of this nation and to everything they produce; and so everything they offer on the altar is defiled.”</p>	

10 בַּעֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַתְּשִׁיעִי בַשָּׁנָה שְׁתַּיִם לְדַרְיוֹשׁ הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־  
חֲנַי הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר: 11 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׂאֵל־נָא אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים תּוֹרָה  
לֵאמֹר: 12 הֵן יִשָּׂא־אִישׁ בְּשֹׁר־קָרֶשׁ בִּכְנָף בְּגָדוֹ וְנָגַע בְּכִנְפוֹ אֶל־הַלֶּחֶם  
וְאֶל־הַנָּזִיד וְאֶל־הַיֵּין וְאֶל־שֶׁמֶן וְאֶל־כָּל־מֵאֲכָל הַיִּקְדָּשׁ וַיַּעֲנוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא: 13 וַיֹּאמֶר חֲנַי אִם־יִגַּע טָמֵא־נַפֶּשׁ בְּכָל־אֵלֶּה הַיְטָמָא וַיַּעֲנוּ  
הַכֹּהֲנִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ יִטָּמָא: 14 וַיַּעַן חֲנַי וַיֹּאמֶר כֵּן הָעַם־הַזֶּה וְכֵן־תִּגְזֹי תְּהִיָּה לְפָנַי  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְכֵן כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיבוּ שֵׁם טָמֵא הוּא:

#### 4.7 Exercises—Haggai 2:10-14

- a) What evidence is there for a new discourse division at 2:10—what are the *markers* of this break? (Note that the final Hebrew letter פ also suggests that a section of discourse ends *after* v. 9.)
- b) The section above ends after v. 14, but many versions and commentaries (including the UBS Translator’s Handbook) prefer to begin the next major unit at v. 20—that is, including vv. 15-19 in the present section. What is your opinion on this important issue, and what are your reasons for coming to this conclusion (see also the note in the NET)? We will consider the larger text structure and the LORD’s rhetorical “argument” again when we come to v. 15.
- c) What is the difference between the RSV and the GNT with regard to the textual arrangement or **format** of the present section covering vv. 10-14? Which method do you prefer and why?
- d) Verse 10 is *similar* to which other verse in the book of Haggai? What is the *difference* between these two verses in terms of their structure (not in the details)?
- e) Instead of “came by” what does the GNT say? Note that the GNT thereby indicates a slight difference in the Hebrew text—that is, came/was ‘to’ (אֶל) instead of came/was ‘by [the] hand of’ (בְּיָד) as in 1:1 and 2:1. Which version do you want to follow in YL (or neither) and why?



- f) Why do you think that the GNT includes the words LORD “Almighty” in v. 10 (cp. v. 11)? Do you recommend this procedure of *eliminating redundancy* in YL? Why (not)? Can you see any special reason for the repeated use of the prophetic formula in vv. 10-11?
- g) Point out the difference between the RSV and the GNT in how they render the main *imperative* of v. 11? How would you express this *technical* (legal) expression in YL (cf. Lev. 10:10-11; Deut. 17:8-12, 31:11; cf. Mal. 2:7-9)? Do you have an idiom to convey this notion?
- h) Point out three differences between the RSV and GNT in the wording of certain *technical terms* in v. 12. Which version do you prefer and why? Tell how you will express each of these words in YL: “holy flesh” (שֶׁר-לֶקֶדֶשׁ), “skirt” (כְּנֵפִי), “pottage” (נִזְיִד).
- i) Is there any way that you need to modify the *very long* question of v. 12 in order to ask it in a natural way in YL? Explain the point or intention of this query. Does anything similar occur in the traditional religious rites of your culture? If so, give an example.
- j) What does the initial word “Suppose...” in the GNT suggest (contrast “If” of the RSV)? Do you have a similar word in YL that indicates that a *hypothetical example* is about to be given?
- k) Why do you think that GNT adds the words “When the question was asked...” —which are not present in the original Hebrew text? Do you need to add these or similar words in YL? Explain.
- l) Is it a *polite response* in YL simply to say “No!”? If not, how must you modify the priests’ reply to make it polite?
- m) Do people become “defiled” by touching a “dead body” in your culture (v. 13)? If so, what must be done to “purify” the person? How was this carried out according to the Mosaic ceremonial law (cf. Num. 19:13, 22)?

- n) How do you express the concept of being “unclean” or “defiled” (אָטוּם) in YL? Must you use a *euphemism* (term of avoidance) to mention a “corpse” in public speech (lit. Heb. ‘soul, breath’ נַפְשׁ)?
- o) Why don’t the priests simply answer “Yes!”? (Note that their answer is a complete utterance in Hebrew: ‘he becomes defiled’ אָטוּם.)
- p) Why does the GNT add the words “The LORD says that...” in v. 14—which are not in the original text? Do you need this same sort of a *bridge* (transitional) expression in YL? Explain.
- q) What word(s) in the RSV correspond(s) to the GNT’s “the same thing applies”? Why is this expression needed in English? Is it necessary also in YL? Explain why (not). (Note the 3x *repeated Hebrew particle* showing a *comparative* relationship—namely: וְכֵן.)
- r) How does the GNT render “with this people and with this nation”? How will you translate this in YL—and tell why you must express it in this way?
- s) Notice the different placement of the expression “says the LORD” (אָמַר יְהוָה) in the RSV and the GNT. Which *lexical position* works better in YL from a rhetorical perspective and why?
- t) How does the GNT render the word “there” (שָׁם)? Evaluate the correctness of the GNT in the light of what you think that the LORD wished to teach his people through this little object lesson.

RSV	Haggai	2:15-19	GNT
<sup>15</sup> Pray now, consider what will come to pass from this day onward. Before a stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the LORD, <sup>16</sup> how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw		<b>The LORD Promises His Blessing</b> <sup>15</sup> The LORD says, “Can’t you see what has happened to you? Before you started to rebuild the Temple, <sup>16</sup> you would go to a pile of grain expecting to find twenty bushels, but there would be	

fifty measures, there were but twenty.<sup>17</sup> I smote you and all the products of your toil with blight and mildew and hail; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD.<sup>18</sup> Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider:<sup>19</sup> Is the seed yet in the barn? Do the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree still yield nothing? From this day on I will bless you."

only ten. You would go to draw fifty gallons of wine from a vat, but find only twenty.<sup>17</sup> I sent scorching winds and hail to ruin everything you tried to grow, but still you did not repent.<sup>18</sup> Today is the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, the day that the foundation of the Temple has been completed. See what is going to happen from now on.<sup>19</sup> Although there is no grain left, and the grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced, yet from now on I will bless you."

<sup>15</sup> ועתה שימו־נא לבבכם מן־היום הַזֶּה וּמַעַלָּה מִטָּרֶם שׁוּם־אֶבֶן אֶל־אֶבֶן בְּהִיכַל יְהוָה: <sup>16</sup> מִהֵיוֹתֶם בָּא אֶל־עֲרֻמַּת עֲשָׂרִים וְהִיִּתָּה עֲשָׂרָה בָּא אֶל־הִזְקֵב לַחֲשֹׁף חֲמִשִּׁים פּוּלָה וְהִיִּתָּה עֲשָׂרִים: <sup>17</sup> הֲכִיתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּשָּׂדֶפֶן וּבִיָּרְקוֹן וּבִבְרָד אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם וְאִין־אַתֶּכֶם אֵלַי נְאֻם־יְהוָה: <sup>18</sup> שִׁמּוּ־נָא לִבְבְּכֶם מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּמַעַלָּה מִיּוֹם עֲשָׂרִים וְאַרְבָּעָה לַחֲשִׁיעֵי לַמֶּן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִסַּד הִיכַל־יְהוָה שִׁמּוּ לִבְבְּכֶם: <sup>19</sup> הָעוֹד הַזֶּרַע בַּמְּגוּלָה וְעַד־הַגֶּפֶן וְהַתְּאֵנָה וְהָרְמוֹן וְעֵץ הַזַּיִת לֹא נִשָּׂא מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֶבְרָד: ס

#### 4.7 Exercises—Haggai 2:15-19

- What would seem to indicate that a *discourse break* occurs at v. 15? Is this a *major* or a *minor* one? Give textual support for your conclusion. If you think that this is only a minor break, what should be done with the section heading of the GNT?
- To whom is Haggai speaking in this section (the Heb. 'you' is plural)? Cite some evidence for choosing this *addressee* (group) from the text.
- The expression "now" in RSV (lit. in Hebrew 'and now': וְעַתָּה) indicates that a new stage in the discourse (e.g., a prophetic argument, exposition, or exhortation) is beginning at this point (cf. 1:5, 2:4). Do you have an equivalent *text sequence marker* in YL? How do you like the way that the GNT has handled this transition?

- d) The GNT begins v. 15 with “The LORD says...”—which is not found in the Hebrew. Why do you think that these words have been added (cf. v. 17b)? Which *discourse strategy* works better in YL?
- e) The *imperative* “Consider” (Heb. ‘set to your hearts’ שִׁמוּנָא לְבַבְכֶּם) is strengthened by a particle rendered by the RSV as “Pray” (וְנָא). How would you express this same function in YL?
- f) How does the GNT translate the RSV’s introduction: “Before a stone was placed upon a stone...” (מִטֶּרֶם שׁוּם-אֶבֶן אֶל-אֶבֶן)? Do you have a **figurative equivalent** to the RSV in YL?
- g) What in the GNT corresponds to the RSV’s “from this day *onward*” (מִזֶּה הַיּוֹם וּמַעְלָה)? What is the meaning of the time phrase in this context—what does the LORD want to tell his people? (Consult several commentaries or study Bibles, including the NET below.)
- h) The GNT drops the *attributive phrase* “of the LORD” after the noun “temple” (“palace” – בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה). Why do you think that it does this, and is this procedure a good one for YL? Explain.
- i) What is the meaning of RSV’s “how did you fare” in v. 16 (lit. ‘from their being’ – מִהְיוֹתָם)? Do you have an *idiomatic* way of expressing this idea in YL? If so, explain what this is. Note where the GNT has placed these words. Is this a good model to follow? Explain.
- j) Explain the two *hypothetical examples* that are given in v. 16—what is their meaning and how do they reinforce Haggai’s message to the people at this stage?
- k) What does “a heap of twenty measures” (עֲרֻמַּת עֶשְׂרִים) refer to? How could you express this *ambiguous* phrase meaningfully in YL?

- l) What is a “winevat” (יֶקֶב), and how will you render this *technical term* in YL? How about the “fifty measures” (חֲמִשִּׁים פּוּרָה)—how can you express that so it makes sense in YL?
- m) Are exact *numerical equivalents* necessary in v. 16? If not, what is the point of these illustrations, and how could you say this more forcefully and idiomatically in YL?
- n) Instead of the literal “smote” (הִכִּיתִי) to begin v. 17, what verb does GNT use? Which is a better model in YL and why? What does the RSV mean by saying, “I smote you...with blight and mildew”?
- o) How does the GNT express what the RSV translates a “all the products of your toil” (lit. ‘all the work of your hands’ – כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיכֶם)?
- p) Instead of “blight” for the Hebrew term שֹׁדֶפֶן, GNT more correctly translates “scorching winds”. How do you express this sort of plague in YL? Do you have a word for “hail” in YL (בָּרָד)? GNT seems to leave out the middle plague, “mildew” (יֶרֶקוֹן). What does that refer to (consult a commentary), and how would you express this concept in YL?
- q) The RSV translation “yet you did not return to me” is literally in Hebrew ‘and there was not you (pl.) unto me’ (וְאִין־אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי). What does this mean, and how can you best express this idea in YL? Notice how the NET interprets and translates this expression; do you agree?
- r) Do you see any special rhetorical purpose for the *prophetic speech punctuator* “utterance/oracle of Yahweh” (נְאֻם־יְהוָה) at the end of v. 17? Can you just leave it out of your translation, like the GNT does? Explain.
- s) The words leading off v. 18 *repeat* what is found at the beginning of which other verse? What does this mean for you as a translator? The repetition here, together with the date formula, also serves to *mark the beginning* of a minor division within this section, vv. 15-19. Do you need to put a paragraph break here? Why, or why not? Which *compositional strategy* helps your reader more?

- t) What *time reference* is being specified in v. 18 by the expression “from this day onward” (cf. the reference in v. 15 – מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּמֵעַתָּה)? Notice where the GNT places its equivalent for this expression; which *verse position* is more natural in YL? Explain why, if you can.
- u) The RSV translates: “Since the day that the foundation of the LORD’s temple was laid” (cf. NIV). How do the GNT and the NET express this? Which version do you wish to follow in YL and why? (Consult a commentary on this matter.)
- v) Verse 19 is very difficult to translate, as you can see from the different renderings in the RSV, NIV, GNT, and NET (below). The RSV begins with a *rhetorical question* (as in the Hebrew)—what is the *expected answer* to this question (cf. GNT)? What kind of “seed” (הַזֵּרַע) is being referred to here?
- w) To make things a little easier, we might simply choose to follow the two versions that seem to present the same understanding of this verse, namely, the NIV and the GNT. Which of these two versions would serve as a better *translation model* in YL? Why?
- x) How do you express these agricultural products in YL (the Hebrew terms are *collective* and therefore grammatically singular. In English, the terms require plural forms): “grape vines” (גִּפְנוֹ), “fig trees” (תְּאֵנָה), “pomegranates” (רְמוֹן), and “olive trees” (עֵץ הַזַּיִת)?
- y) Which words express the **climax** of this verse as well as that of this section as a whole? How would you *mark* this discourse peak in YL? Notice in particular what the NIV has done.
- z) How would you express this final utterance “From this day on, I will bless you” (מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲבָרְכְּךָ) in a *forceful* manner in YL? Give an English back-translation of what you have said.

RSV	Haggai	2:20-23	GNT
<p><sup>20</sup> The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, <sup>21</sup> "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, <sup>22</sup> and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his fellow. <sup>23</sup> On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealti-el, says the LORD, and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts."</p>		<p><b>The LORD's Promise to Zerubbabel</b></p> <p><sup>20</sup> On that same day, the twenty-fourth of the month, the LORD gave Haggai a second message <sup>21</sup> for Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah: "I am about to shake heaven and earth <sup>22</sup> and overthrow kingdoms and end their power. I will overturn chariots and their drivers; the horses will die, and their riders will kill one another. <sup>23</sup> On that day I will take you, Zerubbabel my servant, and I will appoint you to rule in my name. You are the one I have chosen." The LORD Almighty has spoken.</p>	

<p><sup>20</sup> וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה   שְ�נִית אֶל־חֲנִי בַעֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ לֵאמֹר: <sup>21</sup> אֲמַר</p> <p>אֶל־זְרֻבָּבֶל פֶּתַח־יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר אֲנִי מְרַעֵשׂ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ: <sup>22</sup></p> <p>וְהַפֹּכְתִי כִסֵּא מַמְלָכוֹת וְהַשְׁמַדְתִּי חֹזֶק מַמְלָכוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְהַפֹּכְתִי מִרְכָּבָה וְרִכְבֵּיהָ וַיִּרְדּוּ סוּסִים וְרִכְבֵּיהֶם אִישׁ בַּחֶרֶב אֶחָיו: <sup>23</sup> בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נֹאֵם־יְהוָה</p> <p>צְבָאוֹת אֶקְחֶךָ זְרֻבָּבֶל בֶּן־שָׁאֲלֵיאל עַבְדִּי נֹאֵם־יְהוָה וְשִׁמְתִּיךָ כְּחוֹתֶם כִּי־</p> <p>בְּךָ בָּחַרְתִּי נֹאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:</p>
--

#### 4.8 Exercises—Haggai 2:20-23

- a) What marks a *new section* beginning at v. 20? How can you distinguish this point in your translation? Do you need a *section heading* here? If so, what wording do you suggest in YL (also give a back-translation into English)?

[NOTE: At this stage, check, revise, and write out all the section headings that you have proposed for the book of Haggai. Does the result give a satisfactory summary of the main messages of this text? Make any additional revisions that are necessary to prepare such a coherent outline.]

- b) How does the GNT render the RSV's "a second time" (שֵׁנִית)? Which version serves as a better model for your translation and why?
- c) Notice that the sentence of v. 20 carries on into v. 21. Does this make it *too long* for people to follow and understand in YL? If so, what can you do to break this utterance up at the end of v. 20? (Compare the different translations that you have.)
- d) What problem do you see in the GNT's wording: "the LORD gave a second message to Haggai"? How would you revise this to avoid any possible misunderstanding?
- e) What difficulty is introduced by the RSV's translation of v. 21 (extending also into v. 22): "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying,..."? How do you propose revising the text to remove the problem presented by this *embedded quotation*—or does it cause no problems in YL?
- f) The words of v. 21b are the same as those found in which other verse of Haggai? What is the communicative significance of such *reiteration*—in other words, what pragmatic function does it serve at this point in the text?
- g) What is the meaning of the English expression "I am about to"? What is another way of saying this—using words that would translate more easily into YL (note also the NET)?
- h) *Who is speaking* these words; that is, to whom does the pronoun "I" (אֲנִי) refer? Is the personal **referent** clear in YL? If not, how can you clarify who is actually the speaker of these words?
- i) Verse 22 is rather redundant in Hebrew—the same general idea is repeated in this verse using different words. What is the *rhetorical purpose* of this device in Hebrew poetry? Can the redundancy serve the same function in YL? Explain your answer. Notice what the GNT has done to eliminate this redundancy. Do you think that the GNT has left out any important concept or expression—that is, in comparison with a more literal version like the RSV, NIV, or NET?



- j) What is the meaning of the RSV's rendering: "[I am about to] overthrow the throne of kingdoms" (וְהִפְכֹתִי בִסֵּא מַמְלָכוֹת)? Do you have an *idiomatic* way of saying this in YL, perhaps through the use of an *ideophone*? If so, give your translation as an example of a more vivid rendition that matches the power of the original text.
- k) Can you use the same verb "overthrow" (הִפְכֹתִי) with reference to "chariots and their riders" (מִרְכָבָה וְרִכְבָּיָהּ)? If not, what do you suggest for YL?
- l) What does the text mean by saying that all the horses and their riders "will go down" (יִרְדּוּ)—*go down* where? Explain the meaning of the *Hebrew idiom* "every one by the sword of his fellow" (אִישׁ בְּחֶרֶב אָחִיו). Do you have an idiomatic way of expressing this same idea in YL?
- m) Should a new paragraph be started at v. 23? Explain why. This verse begins "On that day..." (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא)—but which day is referred to here? What is the special significance of this "day"? Remember how you have translated this key *eschatological opener* in the past.
- n) Note the threefold repetition of "says the LORD of Hosts" (נְאֻם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) in v. 23. The repetition may actually serve different *discourse functions* here; can you suggest what these might be? Evaluate the GNT translation with respect to this issue. What do you propose for YL and why?
- o) What identifying phrase has the GNT omitted with reference to Zerubbabel? Should the same thing be done in your translation? Explain.
- p) What is semantically significant about the expression "my servant" (עַבְדִּי) in the Hebrew Scriptures (see the NET note)? Is a similar connotation conveyed in your translation? If not, what might be done about this loss of "meaning"? Is a reference note needed here? If so, suggest what this might be.
- q) Explain the symbolical sense of the *simile* of the "signet ring" (חוֹתָם) with reference to Zerubbabel (cf. the NET note). First describe how you can analyze such similes and metaphors. How has the GNT translated this expression? How would you render it

meaningfully in YL—do you have a similar concept or custom in your culture? Explain your answer. What important cross reference needs to be put into your translation at this verse? Explain why.

- r) Notice how the GNT has translated the clause “...for I have chosen you” (בְּחַרְתִּי). GNT is a better rendering in this case; try to give a reason from a **rhetorical** standpoint (i.e., relating to impact & appeal).
- s) Make a list of the *five most difficult translation problems* that you have encountered in the book of Haggai. Clearly explain each problem along with your proposal for resolving it in YL. Alternatively, specify which difficulty still needs to be explained or clarified for you.
- t) What suggestions can you offer to help your primary target audience to more effectively “engage” with your translation of Haggai? (For some ideas, see Hill & Hill, 2008, chs. 16-24 in particular.)

## 5. An Exercise in Poetic, Oral-Aural Analysis and Translation – 1 Corinthians 13

As a final practical task to conclude this overview of literary-structural analysis techniques, we will turn to the study of a well-known pericope, 1 Corinthians 13. The ultimate aim is to produce a dynamically matching “poetic” and meaning-centered version in one’s mother tongue, one that is based on a prior analysis of the Greek text and that also highlights the sonic dimension of this stirring passage in the TL. I have not presented the results of my own study of this favorite section of Scripture below; readers will have seen enough of my approach to the task in preceding exercises. Rather, I have simply suggested (and in certain cases also briefly exemplified) a number of exploratory “steps” that may be followed during the process of biblical discourse “analysis” and its subsequent “synthesis,” or translation, into another language. I have periodically inserted some specific, text-related questions along the way (*marked by italics*) in order to stimulate further thought (and possibly discussion if this is being done as a group project).

The following 16 guidelines, arranged into two sets of eight (moving from *analysis* to *synthesis*), may be followed exactly, or modified as desired (e.g., reordered, reworded, added to,

deleted from), or ignored completely during this practical exercise—as long as the ultimate objective is accomplished. That goal would be the production of a TL rendition that proclaims the Word of the Lord in a manner that reproduces in “the tongues of human beings” (ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων) something of the text’s manifold forcefulness, feeling, and esthetic effect in addition to its author-intended meaning (content + intent). In a sense then, you are free to “practice what you preach” in terms of (a) your chosen method of discourse analysis, (b) your style or type of translation, and (c) your preferred manner of publicly vocalizing a given composition of Scripture in a contemporary language.

## 5.1 Analysis: Eight Suggested Steps for Studying a Biblical Text

An unformatted version of the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 13 (from *Paratext 7.1*) is reproduced below for reference, accompanied by an example of its moderately formal rendering in English, namely, the *New English Translation*.<sup>26</sup>

1 Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ  
ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἢ ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον  
ἀλαλάζον. 2 καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ  
εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν  
γνῶσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν  
ὥστε ὅρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω,  
οὐθέν εἰμι. 3 κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ  
ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά  
μου ἵνα καυχῶμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω,  
οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.

4 Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ  
ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, [ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ  
περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται, 5 οὐκ  
ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ  
παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν, 6  
οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ  
ἀληθείᾳ· 7 πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει,  
πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει. 8 Ἡ  
ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει· εἴτε δὲ

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of  
angels, but I do not have love, I am a noisy gong  
or a clanging cymbal. 13:2 And if I have  
prophecy, and know all mysteries and all  
knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can  
remove mountains, but do not have love, I am  
nothing. 13:3 If I give away everything I own,  
and if I give over my body in order to boast, but  
do not have love, I receive no benefit. 13:4 Love  
is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love  
does not brag, it is not puffed up. 13:5 It is not  
rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily  
angered or resentful. 13:6 It is not glad about  
injustice, but rejoices in the truth. 13:7 It bears  
all things, believes all things, hopes all things,  
endures all things. 13:8 Love never ends. But if

<sup>26</sup> Scripture quoted by permission from the *NET Bible*®, copyright © 2003 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C., [www.netbible.com](http://www.netbible.com), all rights reserved.

προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε  
 γλῶσσαι, παύσονται· εἴτε γνώσεις,  
 καταργηθήσεται. 9 ἐκ μέρους γὰρ  
 γινώσκουμεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους  
 προφητεύομεν· 10 ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ  
 τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.  
 11 ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος,  
 ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς  
 νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ  
 τοῦ νηπίου. 12 βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι'  
 ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ  
 πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι  
 γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ  
 ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.  
 13 νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ  
 τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.

there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if  
 there are tongues, they will cease; if there is  
 knowledge, it will be set aside. 13:9 For we know  
 in part, and we prophesy in part, 13:10 but when  
 what is perfect comes, the partial will be set  
 aside. 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a  
 child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a  
 child. But when I became an adult, I set aside  
 childish ways. 13:12 For now we see in a mirror  
 indirectly, but then we will see face to face.  
 Now I know in part, but then I will know fully,  
 just as I have been fully known. 13:13 And now  
 these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But  
 the greatest of these is love.

Before beginning the little exercise below, one important discourse feature needs to be determined—or at least a hypothesis made that may be either confirmed or corrected by the subsequent analysis. The crucial question is this: what type of a text are we dealing with, or what is its literary “genre”?

❖ *We have begun with the assumption that we are dealing with a “poetic” text in the case of 1 Cor. 13. Would you agree? If so, what would you call it in terms of **genre**? Check several commentaries and give your terminological preference, with reasons.*

❖ *If you agree that the text is “poetic” (if not pure poetry, then poetic prose), there should be some significant literary features to support this conclusion. Mention the most important characteristics, in your opinion. Does the TL that you are working with have a functionally equivalent genre? If so, what are its primary features? If not, how do plan to translate this chapter, which is so prominent that it is frequently published as a separate portion?*

❖ *Finally, make a tentative division of the text above into poetic “lines” by inserting a vertical stroke (/) at the end of each line. Do this in pencil so that you can revise your segmentation as you proceed with the following analysis.*

The following eight subsections (9.2.1–9.2.8) outline one practical way to carry out a specifically “literary-structural” discourse analysis:<sup>27</sup>

### ***5.1.1 Evaluate the text’s “given” external boundaries plus any text-critical issues.***

We tend to accept the chapter divisions recorded in our published Bibles without much thought. In certain cases, however, there is appreciable room for doubt. Consider, for example, the comments regarding 12:31, which precedes ch. 13:<sup>28</sup>

The footnotes on punctuation in the UBS Greek text show that editions and translations differ in the paragraphing of 12.31 and 13.1. The UBS Greek text begins a new paragraph at 12.31b, but not at 13.1. This example is followed by **REB**, **ITCL**, **TNT**, and **AT**. But most CLTs, like **TEV**, begin a new paragraph at 12.31b and a new section at 13.1. **NJB**, on the other hand, begins a new section at 12.31a, and a new paragraph at 13.1. Most translations do not agree with **NJB**’s interpretation.

❖ *Study the preceding note and draw your own conclusion, based on the textual evidence:*

*Should a new paragraph begin at 13:1—why or why not?*

❖ *Evaluate Kenneth Bailey’s opinion on this matter: “Seeing 12:31 as a hinge verse between the two chapters [12 and 13] appears to be the best option because verse 31 does indeed conclude chapter 12 and at the same time it provides an important introduction to chapter 13. In like manner 14:1 concludes chap. 13 and introduces chap. 14. . . . A similar hinge appears in 15:58 and joins chapter 15 to chapter 16” (Bailey 2011:355). If you agree with this reasoning, how do you propose handling such “hinge” verses in your translation?*

Major text-critical problems, too, are profitably examined at this initial stage so that a more or less “confirmed” source-language document can serve as the basis for the following analysis. Most of these matters do not significantly affect the content of a given passage, but some do, for example, the disputed reading **καυχῆσθαι** (“I might boast”) as opposed to **καυθήσθαι** (“I will burn”) in 13:3. Then too, there are a number of readings that affect the form rather than the

---

<sup>27</sup> These heuristic steps may be compared with those suggested in Wendland 2004b:ch. 7; cf. Hill 2011:283–284

<sup>28</sup> Cited from the *Paratext 7.1* version of the Translator’s Handbook on 1 Corinthians.

meaning of the text—or, as in the case of 1 Cor. 13, its special “poetic” and “oral-aural” character. Evaluate the following comments by Omanson with respect to the variants in v. 4:

There is good manuscript support for the third occurrence of the words ἡ ἀγάπη. On the other hand, the rhythm and structure (οὐ . . . , οὐ . . . , οὐ . . . ) favor understanding ἡ ἀγάπη as a later addition to the text. In order to represent a balance of these considerations, the words ἡ ἀγάπη are kept in the text but are put in brackets. In addition to the textual problem is the difficulty of knowing how Paul structured the words in this verse. According to the punctuation in the text, the second ἀγάπη goes with the verb χρηστεύεται (is kind). But it is possible to take this noun with the following words οὐ ζηλοῖ, as in the following two translations: “Love is patient and kind. Love envies no one, is never boastful, never conceited” (REB) and “Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited” (NJB). Either way . . . nothing other than stylistic rhythm is at stake. (Omanson 2006:348)

❖ *While one cannot decide this textual matter at such a preliminary stage, translators who are seeking to produce a poetic rendering in their language will have to come back to this question at the close of their analysis: Should ἡ ἀγάπη be included in v. 4? And which verb should the second ἀγάπη be construed with? (See sample translations below.)*

### **5.1.2 Locate the chief “break points” within the text—its internal boundaries.**

The most important unpunctuated boundaries in biblical discourse are those that indicate new “paragraph” (in poetry, “strophic”) units. These may coincide with a larger border, such as a new section or episode (in narrative). Such larger constituents, however, must be established at a later stage of the analysis. One of the clearest markers of the start of a new paragraph is the occurrence of a notable *shift* in form or content from one verse to another, e.g., a change in the topic, speaker, addressees, time or place setting, type of composition (genre), and so forth. At times such a “break” in the text will also be signaled by a certain conjunction or introductory phrase (e.g., “Therefore . . .”; “Now concerning spiritual gifts . . .”) and/or by some other distinctive form, such as a vocative (e.g., “Brothers . . .”).

❖ *Where would you posit paragraph “breaks” in 1 Cor.13, and what evidence can you provide to support these? As a result of this exercise, what are the provisional paragraph units that comprise this chapter? How do these relate in terms of relative size?*

❖ *Bailey (2011:353, 359) proposes the following chiastic organization for chapter 13 and its surrounding verses. Evaluate this proposal in terms of form, content, and function. In other words, how credible is this suggested structure; how does it affect our understanding of Paul’s message; and, if granted, what does this literary arrangement contribute to the Apostle’s argument at this point? Finally, if this structure is deemed valid in terms of the original text, what are the implications for translators—how can they convey this significance in their version?*

1. **Continue in zeal** for *the higher gifts* and I will show the way (12:31)
2.       **Love and the spiritual gifts** (13:1-3): Opens with tongues, prophecy, and knowledge; closes with faith, hope, and love.
3.               **Love defined positively** (13:4a)
- 4                       **Love defined negatively** (13:4b-6): In 3:4-7, Paul begins with an indirect reference to knowledge and closes with a mention of faith, hope, and love.
5.               **Love defined positively** (13:7)
6.       **Love and the spiritual gifts** (13:8-13): Opens with tongues, prophecy, and knowledge; closes with faith, hope, and love.
7. **Continue in zeal** for *the gifts* and run after love (14:1)

### ***5.1.3 Mark areas of key term/phrase repetition and parallelism.***

In a poetic text, repetition—whether synonymous or exact, explicit or implicit (e.g., pronominal)—defines instances of adjacent parallelism, which is common, of course, in all genres of Hebrew poetry. The recursion of prominent terms or phrases may also assist in demarcating the larger components of a given passage, for example, the reiteration of ἡ ἀγάπη at the beginning of verses 4 and 8 (i.e., an instance of structural *anaphora*,<sup>29</sup> which signals the onset of a new paragraph). Repetition, of course, also helps to indicate and/or to underscore the central ideas as well as the principal theme of an established pericope.

❖ *Locate all of the significant instances of repetition in ch. 13 and determine their possible structural (formal), semantic (topical), and/or rhetorical (functional) purpose in the text. These areas of*

---

<sup>29</sup> For this and similar structural markers, see Wendland, *Translating the Literature of Scripture*, 127.

*recursion may be distinctively marked during the analysis process in different ways, depending on the textual medium, e.g., colored highlights, different font styles, underlines, etc.*

❖ *It is also important to note how a biblical author employed certain key terms in the rest of a given composition, especially in passages that precede the pericope being studied. Consider the references to “love” elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, e.g., 1:10-16; 2:9; 3:3; 4:14; 8:1, 11-12; 10:24, 28-29, 32-33; 12:26. Does such intratextual recursion affect our understanding of ἀγάπη in ch. 13? Explain any significant (possible) resonances that you discover.*

#### **5.1.4 Determine places where important literary-rhetorical features converge.**

During this step, we attend to the microstructural characteristics of the text, noting in particular where several of these literary-rhetorical devices come together, e.g., striking figurative language, adjacent lexical repetition, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, irony, imperative, vocative, word-order variation, and phonological marking (e.g., assonance, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm, wordplay—see also #8 below). Such areas of *convergence* often highlight a point of structural, thematic, and/or pragmatic significance, for example, the beginning or ending of a discourse unit, a semantic “peak,” or an emotive “climax.”

❖ *Identify the major areas of stylistic “convergence” in 1 Cor.13 and posit their apparent communicative function(s) within the composition—whether structural, thematic, and/or pragmatic. Note in particular verses 7 and 13. Begin to think of how these points of literary marking may be handled in a corresponding manner in your language.*

#### **9.2.5 Do a lexical-semantic study of key terms and figurative expressions.**

Such a detailed examination of the principal concepts within a passage is essential for its interpretation as well as in preparation for translation into another language and semantic framework. Obviously, in 1 Cor.13, the central word is “love” (ἡ ἀγάπη), and in this case, it might be tempting for interpreters to simply assume that they already “know” its meaning, particularly in English and other languages where accepted biblical terminology has already become well-established and (overly) familiar.<sup>30</sup> In other languages, however, the choosing of the correct term

---

<sup>30</sup> With time and language-change, such long-established usages in the case of certain key biblical terms can become misleading or even erroneous—for example, KJV’s “charity” for ἡ ἀγάπη in 1 Cor. 13.



here (whether a word or phrase) might be an issue of debate. In such cases, the controversy may best be resolved by an extensive lexical-semantic investigation of the original expressions (use of Bible dictionaries, commentaries, a concordance, etc.) coupled with more intensive local cultural study and a corpus analysis of common usages. In the Tonga language of Zambia, for example, the noun used to render ἀγάπη is *luyando*, which is derived from the verb *kuyanda* that has the sense of “to love,” “to like,” or “to desire,” depending on the context. (In fact, the verbal “infinitive” form may be a more natural way of expressing Paul’s intended meaning here).

❖ Which other key terms and figures of speech in 1 Cor.13 need further inspection in order to determine their most appropriate expression in English (or some other language)?

In addition to lexical items that are used in their *literal* sense, the various types of *figurative* language (metaphors, similes, metonyms, etc.) also need to be examined with regard to their contextual meaning and consequent expression in translation. At times, such an investigation can turn out to be more complicated than one anticipated. With respect to the imagery at the beginning of v. 12, for example, even scholars are not agreed on what the Apostle was referring to—that is, the primary basis, or ground, of comparison. The text says literally “For we still see (as) through a mirror ἐν αἰνίγματι.” But what does the last Greek phrase mean? The following are two possible explanations:<sup>31</sup>

- Reference to a mirror may suggest to readers a modern mirror made with glass and mercury. Ancient mirrors, however, were made of polished metal and therefore gave a generally less clear reflection, as the contrast shows.
- *Grk* “we are seeing through [= using] a mirror by means of a dark image.” Corinth was well known in the ancient world for producing some of the finest bronze mirrors available. Paul’s point in this analogy, then, is not that our current understanding and relationship with God is distorted (as if the mirror reflected poorly), but rather that it is “indirect,” (i.e., the nature of looking in a mirror) compared to the relationship we will enjoy with him in the future when we see him “face to face” (Fee 1987:648). The word “indirectly” translates the Greek phrase ἐν αἰνίγματι (“in an obscure image”) which itself

---

<sup>31</sup> The first explanatory note is from the UBS Translator’s Handbook, the second from the NET.

may reflect an allusion to Num 12:8 (LXX οὐ δι' αἰνίγματων), where God says that he speaks to Moses “mouth to mouth [= face to face] . . . and not in dark figures [of speech].” Though this allusion to the OT is not explicitly developed here, it probably did not go unnoticed by the Corinthians who were apparently familiar with OT traditions about Moses (cf. 1 Cor.10:2). Indeed, in 2 Cor.3:13–18 Paul had recourse with the Corinthians to contrast Moses’ ministry under the old covenant with the hope afforded through apostolic ministry and the new covenant. Further, it is in this context, specifically in 2 Cor.3:18, that the apostle invokes the use of the mirror analogy again in order to unfold the nature of the Christian's progressive transformation by the Spirit.

❖ *Study the two preceding notes and other commentaries at your disposal and compare the meaning indicated with the renderings found in a number of modern translations, e.g., “Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror” (NLT). Then propose a dynamic way of translating the sense of this imagery in English (or another language).*

#### **5.1.6 Posit a structural-thematic outline for the entire text.**

This exercise requires one to organize the main sections of a larger portion of defined biblical document, such as a chapter or more, and to formulate summary *headings*, or titles, for the major units. This can serve as a further check on the discourse analysis that was progressively carried out during steps #1-4 and will result in a final analytical proposal for the pericope as a whole. Titles for the various internal subunits should reflect the overarching heading suggested for the macro-unit as a whole. Such subtitles are intended to serve as a guide to readers (and listeners) regarding the *thematic development* of the composition so that they can more easily follow the author’s narrative flow, sequence of ideas, line of reasoning, or—in this case—an unfolding descriptive expression of praise. On the other hand, too many proposed subtitles may be a distraction and disrupt the smooth flow of the text. Most modern versions give only a single heading to cover the entire content expressed in ch. 13.

❖ *Is a single section heading sufficient for 1 Cor.13 in your opinion? If not, where do you suggest placing another one—and what is your proposed wording for this? Evaluate the following chapter*

headings and select which one you feel is best—or make your own suggestion, e.g., “Love Is the Greatest”(NLT), “Love” (GNT), “The Way of Love” (NET), “The Gift of Love” (NRSV).

❖ Consider again your evaluation of the proposed chiasmic arrangement of this chapter (9.2.2). To what extent, if any, does this affect your thematic outline? Explain.

### **5.1.7 Note the primary “speech acts” (illocutions) and “text act” (genre).**

A “speech act” consists of three elements: the *locution*—the actual text recorded; the *illocution*—the intended communicative function of that segment of text; and the *perlocution*—the particular effect produced in a particular audience by communicating that text. When we investigate the speech acts of a given section, we are primarily interested in its sequence of principal illocutions and how this relates then to the illocutionary progression of the composition as a whole, which normally coincides with the typical discourse functions of its genre. The following is a literary description of 1 Cor.13 (Ryken 1992:474):

The genre of 1 Corinthians 13 is the *encomium*, a lyric pericope that praises an abstract quality. The subject of this encomium is love. The passage praises its subject by means of the usual formulas of an encomium: the indispensability of the subject (vv. 1–3), a catalogue of praiseworthy acts and attributes (vv. 4–7), the superiority of love (vv. 8–13), and a concluding command to emulate the subject (14:1, “Make love your aim”).

❖ How would you evaluate the preceding text characterization of 1 Cor.13? Is “love” an adequate term to describe the central theme of this chapter? If not, what do you suggest? What about the division of the text—is it accurate? Any corrections?

❖ While “praise” might be adequate to designate the overt illocution (speech act) of 1 Cor.13, is that designation really sufficient to characterize Paul’s primary purpose—or might there be an underlying communicative aim, namely, an “exhortation” or “encouragement” to do likewise? In other words, as Paul lauds the theological subject of Christlike love, he simultaneously enjoins his readers/hearers ethically to pattern their lives after this supreme (albeit implicit) divine Model (cf. 12:27). What do you think?

❖ How then does chapter 13 relate both topically and functionally with ch. 12, on the one hand, and ch. 14, on the other?

### ***5.1.8 Identify the major oral-aural characteristics of the text.***

Here we again investigate—orally and aurally—the main *phonological* properties of the pericope at hand and note how these relate to the previously analyzed structural and stylistic features of the text (cf. steps 2-3). In the case of 1 Cor. 13, the parallel phrasing is very prominent throughout the discourse. Thus, if this passage is not in fact an instance of Hellenistic poetry, it is most certainly an instance of “poetic prose,” and hence ideally suited for public oral articulation. If that is so, the usual prose paragraph block format of Bible publications is not very suitable or helpful in revealing the crucial rhythm of speech and patterns of repetition. The CEV is one modern translation that does format the text by means of a sequence of “utterance units,” or poetic “lines.” The first three verses are reproduced below for assessment:

1 What if I could speak  
all languages of humans  
    and even of angels?  
If I did not love others,  
    I would be nothing more  
than a noisy gong  
    or a clanging cymbal.  
2 What if I could prophesy  
and understand all mysteries  
    and all knowledge?  
And what if I had faith  
    that moved mountains?  
I would be nothing,  
    unless I loved others.  
3 What if I gave away all  
    that I owned  
and let myself  
    be burned alive?  
I would gain nothing,  
    unless I loved others.

❖ *How helpful do you find this poetic format? Suggest ways in which it might be improved, for example, if there were no restriction on line length (i.e., in a single column text)?*

❖ Critically compare the CEV selection above with the following re-formatted section of vv. 1–3 from the NIV. Which do you prefer and why? Can you suggest some improvements to the following proposal? Test the composition and its format by actually reading/reciting it aloud (and if possible by listening to someone else read it):

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, 1.  
**but have not love,**  
*I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

If I have the gift of prophecy 2.  
and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge,  
and if I have a faith that can move mountains,  
**but have not love,**  
*I am nothing.*

If I give all I possess to the poor 3.  
and surrender my body to the flames,  
**but have not love,**  
*I gain nothing.*

## 5.2 Synthesis: Eight Suggested Steps for Translating a Biblical Text

After carrying out the preceding eight steps (+/- other methods) when analyzing a particular text of Scripture, one may turn one's attention either to rendering the original message in another language or to revising/improving an already existing version. However, before any program of translation can be embarked upon, it is necessary to do some research in order to specify the parameters, or job commission (technically termed the "translation brief"), for the project.<sup>32</sup> The following eight subsections will cover some of the issues that such research and sampling will investigate and decide upon.

### 5.2.1 Identify the intended audience for the translation.

The most important aspect of a translation project brief is to determine *for whom* the version is intended. The day of the "one size fits all" translation has virtually ended, except for those projects that are undertaken for reasons other than adequate and acceptable communication with

---

<sup>32</sup> For more information about a translation brief and related issues, see Wendland 2004b:50–3, 290–91.

a specified constituency or group (e.g., an ideological aim, such as the *New World Translation* of the Jehovah's Witnesses). Translators need to be able to *imagine* some actual representatives of their intended target community as they seek to employ wording that will satisfy them in terms of the purpose for which the version is primarily being prepared (point #2). Quite a range of demographic variables or options are relevant here, for example: audience age (children, youth, middle-aged, elderly), church affiliation (Catholic, Protestant, Interconfessional), educational standard (basic, secondary school, college/university), general level of biblical literacy (novice, medium level, mature), economic capacity, and so forth.

❖ *Specify the primary audience constituency or particular sub-group that you intend to communicate with, generally speaking. Has the Bible version that you normally use been specifically composed and designed with this community in mind? Give several precise reasons supporting your negative or positive response. How might your new translation (or revised version) differ? List some of the most important features, and tell why such modifications or changes are necessary.*

### **5.2.2 Specify the primary purpose, medium, and principal setting of use.**

After the intended audience (readership), the second most important consideration is this: *why* is the version in question being prepared? What is the chief communicative goal that it is intended to achieve? Next, the *how*, the primary medium and mode of communication must be determined—oral/aural, written, video, electronic, dramatic stage, or some combination of these. Also important is the major location of use: *where* will this version be mostly used? Here again, there are a number of potential options, for example: in formal worship and liturgical settings, theological college, Bible school, etc., or in more informal situations—outside of “church” or “school”: for home Bible study sessions or to provide Scriptural readings as a stimulus to prayer; simply reading through the Bible in a year or studying particular texts to learn more about them; using the text for the purposes of memorization or to serve as the basis for creating a musical version of the passage.

❖ *How would you specify the purpose and occasion for the Bible translation that you normally use? Assuming that there are a number of possibilities here, do you find that a single version is suitable for them all? If not, which setting and use would seem to require a different translation? Does 1 Cor.13 seem to lend itself to one particular setting and religious purpose? If so, describe what you have in mind.*

❖ *In which ways would a completely oral text, as on a CD recording, differ from a written one in the case of your translation of 1 Cor.13? What are some of the “oral markers” that would be needed, for example, to indicate major text transitions, emphasis or focus, key implications, deictic references, and so forth? Mention three specific items.*

❖ *Would some additional verbal signals be needed for naturalness in conjunction with hand gestures, facial expressions, and body movements if this text were to be performed dramatically, as in a public stage production?*<sup>33</sup>

### **5.2.3 Determine the type of translation to be prepared.**

Many different translations are possible, depending on the primary consumer group envisaged (see #1 above) and the type of use for which the version is mainly intended (see #2). In some cases, there is also a definite ideological factor involved; certain conservative religious constituencies, for example, assert that only an essentially literal (“formal correspondence”) version can be “faithful” to the original Word of God. Any other type of translation always distorts or mis-represents the biblical text, or so it is alleged.<sup>34</sup> Depending on the situation then, the type or style of translation desired may range from the very literal to the very free with regard to the linguistic forms used to render the language forms found in the source document, English examples being the *English Standard Version* (ESV) on the one hand, and the *New Living Translation* (NLT) on the other (Wendland 2004b:88–92). Often a compromise must be made between representing significant forms of the SL text and communicating these meaningfully in the TL—thus resulting in a “middle-of-the-road” version. The relative success and ultimate acceptability of any translation must be ascertained through subsequent research and testing procedures (see #7 below).

❖ *In view of your answers to exercises 1–2, what type of translation draft do you propose preparing for 1 Cor. 13? Summarize the reasoning that leads to your decision in this case: what are the chief*

---

<sup>33</sup> For a more detailed discussion of some of these issues pertaining to oral in comparison with written procedural discourse, see Blass 2011.

<sup>34</sup> For example, “The goal of dynamic equivalence translators is to express the primary thought of each verse or passage clearly but they see no need to translate the meaning of every word, and they see nothing wrong with adding some details and expressions that they think will make the primary thought more clear or vivid . . . The goal of translation is not being faithful to the original text, but rather the goal is to bring about a proper response from the reader” (Grudem et al. 2005:48, 53).

*factors of influence involved, e.g., the manifest orality of the original text, its poetic qualities, its rhetorical objectives, other prominent concerns or issues?*

#### **5.2.4 Outline a text-comparative translation methodology.**

It is one thing to select a particular style of translation to pursue; it is quite another to specify the appropriate practical methods and operational procedures to carry this out in a real-life situation. However, without a clearly-defined methodology and set of procedural guidelines, it is doubtful that such an enterprise will produce a successful, or at least a consistent result. This is especially important where a diverse “team” of translators and reviewers must work together. There are a number of published translation approaches from which to choose nowadays,<sup>35</sup> but one needs to pick the one that will most closely approximate the type of version desired (determined in #3 above) that will, in turn, effectively accomplish the goals that have been set out for the project (modeled in #2). Normally one’s methodology will include a prominent *comparative* component. Here a translation draft is first critically and closely compared in various vital respects with the source document. Second, it is compared with other versions of that same passage in the TL if they happen to exist (if not, with a set of different drafts that have been composed by the same translator or team) as well as other language translations that the target community may have access to.

❖ *Draw up a set of general guidelines plus several more specific translation procedures with respect to the translation of 1 Cor. 13 that you intend to prepare, given the presuppositions that have been established by means of exercises 1–3. Note that due attention needs to be accorded in this outline to the dimension of orality.*

❖ *Specify the principal translations that your target audience can read with understanding. Which of these are most important, and why? How might they affect your own version?*

#### **5.2.5 Prepare an English draft translation on the basis of the prior analysis.**

This is the step where a team might be tempted to begin—that is, simply to sit down and intuitively convert a text from one language to another. But as has been suggested above, working through the preceding steps helps translators (whether an individual translator or a team of three

---

<sup>35</sup> For a survey, see Wendland 2004b:42–80; also Munday 2009b and Pym 2010.



or more members) not only to zero in on their primary target audience and communicative aim, but also to develop an explicit compositional strategy and *modus operandi* for carrying out this multifaceted interlingual, cross-cultural task. Consider, for the sake of an initial practice exercise, the following “poetic prose” English draft of vv. 4–7 of 1 Cor. 13:

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη,	Love is patient, love is kind.
οὐ ζηλοῖ, ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται,	Does not envy, never boasts.
οὐ φυσιοῦται, οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ,	It is not proud, never rude,
οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται,	it seeks not self, nor fires up fast.
οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,	Love records no wrongs,
οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ,	nor delights at all in evil,
συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ·	rather rejoices in the truth.
πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει,	Love always protects and trusts,
πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.	yes, ever hopes, ever perseveres.

❖ Now prepare your own English draft translation of vv. 4–7 (or indeed, the whole chapter if so desired). Then double-check by comparing your version with the Greek text, if possible, but otherwise with some relatively literal version (e.g., NRSV, ESV), on the one hand, and several more meaning-oriented versions, on the other—for example, the two modern translations below. After your comparative study, summarize your conclusions.

- <sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind, it isn’t jealous, it doesn’t brag, it isn’t arrogant, <sup>5</sup> it isn’t rude, it doesn’t seek its own advantage, it isn’t irritable, it doesn’t keep a record of complaints,<sup>6</sup> it isn’t happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things. (Common English Bible)<sup>36</sup>
- 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (New Living Translation)

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.commonenglishbible.com/Explore/PassageLookup/tabid/210/Default.aspx>, accessed on 26/10/2011. The NLT below has been reproduced from Paratext 7.2.

### ***5.2.6 Translating the same text in another language.***

It is often helpful to try to compose an initial draft translation relatively quickly, especially a poetic one, while one is in a lyric mood and the words are flowing smoothly. Later on then one can take the time to critically compare (once again!) this first attempt with the source text for accuracy with regard to content (no vital semantic components missing) and with other translations, if available, with respect to form and function. In other words, other Scripture versions or the translations found in commentaries may suggest alternative terms and expressions that would better fulfill the objectives of the translation at hand. Finding other versions for comparison is quite easy for English and other languages of wider communication, but this may prove more difficult in the case of languages that do not have a long or developed history of publication. In such situations, perhaps it is possible to find a translation in a related language or some other well-known vernacular version which can serve as the basis for the essential comparative and cross-checking operation.

❖ *Prepare a draft translation in a language other than English, giving special attention to the form, content, and function of the text in relation to the translation parameters that were specified in steps 1-4. After a draft has been prepared, check this for possible revision by carefully comparing it with all of the other versions that are available, including the draft that you composed in step #5.*

### ***5.2.7 Check the draft with added attention to its oral-aural dimension.***

This step incorporates another review of your translation draft (step #6) with special reference now to its phonological qualities. This property of the discourse normally needs to be checked as a separate feature so that it receives the full attention it deserves. An initial way of doing this is for the translator to actually utter the TL composition aloud—several times—in order to discern how it sounds in one’s own ears. Listen in particular for attractive and forceful instances of rhythm, alliteration, and euphony in general, and where such characteristics are missing, then seek to build them into the draft in some way that does not compromise its content. Thereafter, the translation should also be tested in a public “performance”—that is, before an actual listening audience: with fellow translators or project committee members, first of all, and, if possible, also before a gathering of members of the target group. If available, more than one lector should be given the opportunity to articulate the text.

❖ *Review your draft translation of 1 Cor. 13 (4–7) aloud as suggested above and make any revisions or improvements that such an exercise may reveal are necessary—namely, for producing an “oratorical” version, a text that virtually calls out to be uttered aloud. Do the same with your sample English translation that was prepared during step #5. Would your drafts need to be modified in any way if they are to be presented orally alone, that is, in the absence of a written text in the hands of the intended audience (cf. 5.2.2)? If so, specify how.*

❖ *1 Cor. proclaims the beauty of divine love in a poetic form that is meant to be heard and responded to in a manner that reflects the sublime character of its content. How often do our translations, in turn, reflect the beauty of the biblical text—its verbal concinnity—using the full literary resources of the TL? Organize a discussion of this issue in relation to your rendering of 1 Cor. 13 as well as your translation project as a whole with reference to the following quotation (for “Christianity,” read “Bible translation”):<sup>37</sup>*

“But it is the third virtue, the virtue of beauty, that has been most marginalized in the way we understand and evaluate Christianity. As a result, Christianity has suffered a loss of beauty—a loss that needs to be recovered. With an emphasis on truth, we have tried to make Christianity persuasive (as we should). But we also need a corresponding emphasis on beauty to make Christianity attractive. Christianity should not only persuade with truth, but it should also attract with beauty. Along with Christian apologetics, we need Christian aesthetics. Christianity needs . . . to be presented as beautiful. Often where truth cannot convince, beauty can entice.”

### ***5.2.8 Indicate how your translation will be tested after publication.***

This step cannot of course be implemented at the present time, unless an actual translation project is being conducted. The point is that the publication of any translation, whether just a portion like 1 Cor. 13 or a complete Bible, is not the end of the story. In one sense, it is only the beginning—that is, the onset of a new project aimed at eventually producing a revised publication of a certain text of Scripture. No translation is perfect, and improvements—great and small—can always be made, sooner or later. A variety of test samples and styles (types of testing) should be prepared (in advance) and a credible assessment procedure devised, that is, in keeping with the pre-determined translation brief. Individual respondents as well as review committees,

---

<sup>37</sup> The quotation is from Brian Zahnd, *Beauty Will Save the World: Rediscovering the Allure and Mystery of Christianity* (Lake Mary, FL:Charisma House, 2012), cited in *Christianity Today* (February 2012), 50.

informal (ecclesial, lay, non-specialist) and formal (academic, specialist), from among members of target audience may then be selected, educated, trained (if necessary, depending on the scope of the project), and engaged in this task as soon after publication as feasible. A reliable method must also be developed for accurately compiling and categorizing the results of all these translation testing exercises.

❖ *Make a list of qualified individuals or groups, both professional and lay, who would be in a position to evaluate your translation and to offer critical suggestions for improvement. Again, this should entail not only an examination of the written text but also its oral proclamation before a listening audience comprised of members of the target group.*

❖ *If it is achievable to gain such feedback (even in a preliminary manner), then make the appropriate revisions, as needed, to prepare an official “final corrected copy” of the translation, which should be safely stored in both hard copy and an electronic file for future reference and possible use.*

❖ *Evaluate the following quote, which defines the distinction between an “analytic” and a “synthetic” translation, and comment on whether, in your opinion, the activity of “summarizing”—orally!—might be used to evaluate a draft translation—if not of 1 Cor. 13, then a less familiar epistolary passage of Scripture: “The analytical translation enables the ‘reader’ to tear the text apart, to get at the details, to perform word studies, even to hear the underlying original language. . . . The synthetic translation enables the reader to process the text’s meaning, to follow the flow of the author’s thought, to engage in the narrative. . . . I can’t help but think that a good text—that is, a well written one—enables a reader to summarize” (Sangrey 2012)—that is, more readily than an analytic (more formally correspondent) version would.*

### **5.3 A final exercise—1 Cor. 13:7**

❖ *Read through the following interesting and informative blog post and subsequent comments, which deal with the translation of 1 Cor. 13:7.<sup>38</sup> Use this as the basis for a further discussion of the various issues that are brought up by the various writers—however, now with reference to your mother tongue or the language into which you are translating.*

---

<sup>38</sup> The initial entry was written by Iver Larsen, posted on May 15, 2011 at 12:45 pm at this website: <http://betterbibles.com/2011/05/15/1-cor-137-the-language-of-love/#comments>

## 1 Cor. 13:7 – the language of love

One of the most famous and beloved passages in the NT is 1 Cor. 13. I have been digging into the Greek text of verse 7 recently and thought I might share my thoughts with you.

The Greek words are: πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει. RSV provides a fairly literal translation: *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

The verse is poetic in two ways: the rhetorical repetition of πάντα (*panta*) – *all things* or *everything* or *all the way* and a chiasm. Let me explain the chiasm. The Greek word στέγει (*stegei*) is very close in meaning to ὑπομένει (*hupomenei*), so the first and last words are close. Similarly the words for believe and hope are close in meaning, so the two middle words correspond to each other.

στέγω only occurs 4 times in the NT and all in Paul's letters. Let us look at each of these: 1 Corinthians 9:12 – we endure everything (NET), we put up with anything (NIV); 1 Corinthians 13:7 – bears all things (NET), always protects (NIV); 1 Thessalonians 3:1 – we could bear it no longer (NET), we could stand it no longer (NIV); 1 Thes. 3:5 – I could bear it no longer (NET), I could stand it no longer (NIV).

I like the NIV idiom “I cannot stand it.” This idiom is mainly used in a negative construction, I believe, so for the positive usage NIV says “we put up with anything.” Why NIV did not also say “Love puts up with anything” in v. 7 I do not know. It would be consistent with 9:12 and give the meaning nicely. Why did they use “protect” and why say “always” instead of “everything” or “anything”? Paul commonly used the standard word for always (*pantote*).

I can only guess the reason for the NIV rendering. My guess is that it was to forestall possible misuses of the text. Because we have a long tradition of pretty unreadable Bible translations,<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> In this connection, evaluate the following observations: “We may have to learn many more new things all at the one time when we read the Bible, but that doesn't require weird language. All human languages have the capacity to express the new concepts which the Bible teaches, although for convenience's sake sometimes a few new words, introduced by the language's existing conventions for introducing jargon, can

Bible readers, including pastors, cannot stand to read many verses at a go before they get tired. Maybe that is one reason for their habit to take one or two verses out of context and meditate or preach on them. The result is often some strange teaching and ideas. Of course, we are not to “put up with everything” in every situation. But this text talks about the characteristics of love. It must be set in the context of a relationship between people, especially the context of a natural and spiritual family. PANTA – *everything/all things* is a rhetorical hyperbole, it does not literally and absolutely mean everything, but it does mean a lot. A loving person puts up with a lot that an unloving person would not put up with. Another reason for the NIV may be that a text is supposed to be read aloud, and “Love bears everything” might possibly be understood when spoken as “Love bares everything.” Or maybe “bear” is just too old-fashioned English?

The final word ὑπομένω (*hupomenw*) means to endure something, *to stay put* when others might have left. These words describe love very well, including the relationship between husband and wife. If I have love, I can put up with (almost) everything in my spouse, and I will stay put in the relationship through difficult times.

The two middle words are πιστεύω (*pisteuw*) and ἐλπίζω (*elpizw*). *PISTEUW* can have a semantic frame with three participants or with two. When *pisteuw* has three participants, it means that A entrusts P to G. . . .

Quite often the verb is used without any object or prepositional phrases, and in such cases there is no way to know whether it is the tri-valent verb “entrust” or the di-valent verb “accept as true”. Context will usually clarify it, but not always.

So, “accept everything as true” shows the attitude of love. You accept that this other person (husband, wife, child, etc.) speaks the truth and can be trusted. It does not mean that we are to accept and believe every wind of doctrine that comes our way. The accusative object “everything” indicates that this is not a matter of believing in God or Jesus, but of accepting as true what the other person is saying.

---

help. Keep your symbols familiar, even if what they reference is not!” (Dannii Willis, <http://betterbibles.com/2011/04/30/weird-books-in-normal-language/>).

ἐλπίζω (*elpizw* – hope) can be used with a semantic Goal in the dative case or a preposition like EIS (towards), e.g. John 5:45 “Moses, in whom you have placed your hope.” . . . However, in most cases ἐλπίζω (*elpizw*) has the two semantic participants Agent and Patient (object). This object may be a clause introduced by *hoti* (that) or it may be a noun that stands for something that you can hope and expect will happen. . .

In 1 Cor. 13:7, the two words hope and believe are parallel in the sense that they are both used with an object (Patient). Love accepts everything as true and hopes for everything. A relationship has hopes and aspirations, but these hopes require acceptance and love to be realized.

## 5.4 Implications: Practicing What You Preach

In this section, we have attempted a “trial-run” at producing a translation that is more in tune with the literary (poetic) features, the rhetorical dynamics, and the oral-aural properties of the biblical text. In this case, the pericope under examination—1 Corinthians 13—was an obvious candidate to serve as the basis for such an exercise because all commentators call attention to its lyrical characteristics in the original Greek. However, as the analyses of other chapters in this volume have suggested, there are many other passages in the Scriptures that give abundant evidence of these literary-structural and phonic-rhetorical attributes, which must therefore also be given appropriate attention when seeking to render these texts with corresponding impact and appeal in another language. To fail to take this into account is to neglect a crucial dimension of the total “meaning,” including the soundscape, which was encoded in the source composition and hence also intended to be communicated to successive generations of readers and listeners.

Our concluding section’s theme of “practicing what you preach” may be applied to the various studies of this book in a twofold sense: In the first place, all those who are convinced of the validity of the claims being made regarding the biblical text can now endeavor to “proclaim” these literary-rhetorical and oratorical aspects of the biblical message by means of their translations (or revisions of existing ones). Such versions will therefore be carefully attuned also to the phonological level of discourse so that the vernacular creation resonates accordingly in that language. Second, all students and proclaimers of Scripture realize that this work is not merely an analytical-translational-transmissional exercise. Rather, there is an ethical-

motivational need also to apply what these passages—*First Corinthians 13 in particular*—declare in a corresponding biblical life-style, one that seriously reflects ἡ ἀγάπη of Christ in action!

שְׁמָעוּ מוֹסֵר וְחֻמּוֹ וְאֶל־תִּפְרָעוּ:

אֲשֶׁר־י אָדָם שְׁמַעַ לִי

(Proverbs 8:33-34a)

μακάριοι οἱ ἀκούοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ φυλάσσοντες. (Luke 11:28)





*Ernst Wendland*<sup>40</sup>  
*Stellenbosch University*  
*June 2016, rev. Jan. 2017*

---

<sup>40</sup> Regarding the illustration above—it is in the public domain: Source = Papyrus Oxvrhynchus 1008. papyrus 15 (Gregory-Aland) Greek manuscript of the New Testament | Author = unknown | Date = 3rd century | Permission = [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:POxy1008\\_\(1Co\\_7.33-8.4\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:POxy1008_(1Co_7.33-8.4).jpg).