

Grasping God's Word – Emmaus Assignment 1 – Joshua Anderson 14/02/2025

Colossian 2:16-17 Translations

New King James Version (NKJV) ****NB: Textus Receptus used not the majority text****

“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”

English Standard Version (ESV)

“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

New International Version (NIV)

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

“Don't let anyone tell you what you must eat or drink. Don't let them say you must celebrate the New Moon festival, the Sabbath, or any other festival. These things are only a shadow of what was to come. But Christ is real!”

Good News Translation (GNT)

“So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink or about holy days or the New Moon Festival or the Sabbath. All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ.”

Passage Comparison Summary

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I chose specifically chose this passage because the just how different various translations render it, the main differences I noticed among the translations is how generally as you move from more 'formal' to more 'functional' translations (descending order) you see the perceived meaning changing dramatically.

Firstly, is whether celebrating the Sabbath or abstaining from eating certain foods (for example) are positive or negative practices, compared to a greater reality in Christ.

Compare: *"So let no one judge you..." (NKJV)*

Therefore let no one pass judgment..." (ESV)

"Therefore do not let anyone judge you..." (NIV)

VS

"Don't let anyone tell you what you must..." (CEV)

"So let no one make rules about what you" (GNT)

Secondly, whether these "*shadow of things*" (meaning *outline* in the original Greek) as translated throughout have a future intention / divine purpose (in line with the original Greek word used) or only bearing historical significance, even though the "*substance is of Christ*" (meaning *body* in the original Greek)

Compare: *"things to come" (NKJV & ESV)*

"in the future" (GNT)

VS

"were to come" (NIV)

"was to come" (CEV)

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Is the Bible a divine-human book?

I agree that the bible is a divine-human book, a reliable un-contradictory eye witness account, to a God who has revealed Himself to regular flawed people, moving them to write down what He required of the past, present & future “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). No other book is ‘living’ where you can continue to find further revelation in the same ‘old’ text. It’s even a book that reveals the future, and itself being written over a millennia we find the proof of some of those futures unfolding - impossible to predict or orchestrate through human cunning.

“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son,^u with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 2:16-21)

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What is a Bible translation?

Translation is the process of translating words or text from one language into another. Bible translation is much the same but with the goal, that through translation in the receptor language, as much as possible, conveys the same meaning God intended from when it was written down in the source language.

The reason this is not a simple process is no two languages are alike with differences in word meaning, vocabulary size, grammatically arrangement and stylistic preferences as well as culture significance, that simple word-for-word translation often providing an extremely different meaning from that that was intended in the original language.

The two main approaches to translation are *Formal Approach* (often called: *word-for-word* or *literal*) and the *Functional Approach* (often called: *idiomatic* or *thought-for thought*).

The *Formal Approach* to translation tries to align itself as closely as possible to the structure and words of the source language, to keep the form intact, technically being more correct, yet in the receptor language, without understanding can lead to the opposite being true.

The *Functional Approach* to translation tries to reproduce the meaning of the source language, disregarding wording or structure that can often hold the key to the intended meaning.