

## **Horne's Ten Principles for Interpretation of Words**

**By**

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Words form thoughts, messages, ideas, and content. They are the building blocks of communications. Therefore, the words, and even the word order, in a language are important. Dr. Leland Ryken said,

“There is no meaning without words, if we change the words, we change the meaning.”<sup>1</sup>

This means that “one jot or one tittle” (Matthew 5:18) has ‘significance’ in a word, and meaning is lost if the word is changed in *any* way. For example, if a singular word is changed to a plural word, the theological implication and meaning could be very significantly affected (cf. Galatians 3:16).

### **Definitions and Concepts**

Before examining Thomas Hartwell Horne’s ten “principles to be employed in the interpretation of words,”<sup>2</sup> several precise definitions and concepts need to be placed before the reader. It should be noted that this author defines “meaning” as the precise sense of a word in a passage. Horne calls it “signification.” Signification is greatly dependant on (1) context, or the passage where the word is found and (2) the etymology of a word. If a word is interpreted or translated by a synonym, whether writing or speaking, great care must be taken.

The synonyms of words are often used when interpreting or translating and can cause enormous problems. For example, the word “rain” should not be replaced by the synonym “precipitation,” which can mean snow, hail, condensation, rain showers, etc. “Precipitation” is a *general* term which includes snow, rain showers, or hail. Synonyms may be used if the passage indicates the *specific* meaning such as snow, hail, rain showers or condensation is meant as opposed to the *general* term “precipitation.” A good illustration is the use of the Greek verb **brexw** (brecho) by the KJB translators, which is translated “to rain” or “to wash,” depending on the context (Matthew 5:45 versus Luke 7:38). Another example is the Hebrew word, מָטַר (matar), always translated “to rain” by the KJB), found in Exodus 9:18, is translated “to send” in the NIV, NASB, and NLT. The NASB does place a marginal note, which says “lit. to rain.” The words “to rain” versus “to send” cannot be compared. In addition, the Hebrew word בָּרַד (barad), translated hail or hailstones, does not mean hailstorm as translated by the NIV and NLT. The *general* term ‘hailstorm’ cannot replace the *specific* words ‘rain’ and ‘hail.’ The word, hailstorm, is not in the text, and substituting words or general synonyms becomes dynamic equivalent translating. In an expository book, the exegesis and interpretation of the words

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<sup>1</sup> Leland Ryken, *Translating Truth* (Crossway Books, Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 2005) 69.

<sup>2</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come, A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1964) 34.

could use “hailstorm,” but they cannot be used in the verbal plenary translating (VPT) of the Words of God.

Similarly, the words “interpretation, interpreting, interpreted” in theological terms carry the *general* ‘meaning’ employed by the science of hermeneutics. In some works (such as the KJB), the *specific* sense of the words (cognate words of interpret) means the precise translation of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek words of the verbal plenary preserved (VPP) and verbal plenary inspired (VPI) Words of God (e.g. Matthew 1:23, Mark 5:41, etc.).<sup>3</sup> The result of *specific* interpreting is VPT of the VPP and VPI words of the source-language according to the syntax of the receptor-language.

In this work, interpretation and its cognates will mean the *general* sense or in other words, the science of hermeneutics. Translation and its cognates will always mean the *specific* interpretation or VPT by this author. One has to decide in the quotes of other authors whether the author is indicating the *general* or the *specific* meaning of the terms, especially the word interpretation.

Interpretation is important. It has a great influence on translation because interpretation is dependent on one’s theology. For example, the translation of the Hebrew word, *הַעַלְמָה* (almah) found in Isaiah 7:14 is translated “virgin” by the KJB and “young woman” by the new version, the Amplified Bible (AB). The AB’s translation corrupts the cohesiveness of the Scriptures; the New Testament passages reflecting the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ are left standing alone (Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:27, etc), and major doctrinal passages of Christianity are altered. The AB translation indicates their translators are influenced by Socinianism. Socinians did not believe in the virgin birth or deity of Christ.

Finally, consider the interpretation of the word, “present.” Does it mean a ‘present’ (gift), a person is ‘present,’ or to ‘present’ something?’ Only the passage in its context can suggest the “signification” or the sense of the meaning of the word.

### The Importance of Word Order

In addition, the order of words in a sentence should be noted. Louis Berkhof has noted the importance of word order. He said:

“The arrangement of the several words in a sentence,’ says Winer, ‘is in general determined by the order in which the conceptions are formed, and by the closer relation in which certain parts of the sentence stand to one another.’ It frequently happens, however, that Biblical writers, for some reason or other, depart from the usual arrangement. In some cases they do this for rhetorical effect; in others, to bring certain concepts into closer relation with each other. But there are also cases in which the desire to emphasize a certain word led to its transposition. These instances are particularly important for the interpreter. The context will usually reveal the reason for the change that was brought about.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Dr. D. A. Waite in a personal communication to this author states: “[T]he NT use [of] “interpreted” is limited in the 7 places it occurs [in Scripture], to a TRANSLATION of an Aramaic or a Hebrew word and is not used in the wider sense of “INTERPRETED.” [HDW, my additions] The word, interpret, and its cognates occurs 21 times (3 x 7) and all occurrences have the same meaning.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, © 1950, twenty-fourth printing, 1994) 91-92.

The meaning of the passage in Scripture can be misinterpreted and doctrine can go awry if close attention to these details are ignored. The result of ignoring these principles is the “words of our Lord Jesus Christ” and the “doctrine of men” are taught not according to “godliness” (Matthew 15:9; 1 Timothy 6:3). Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, becomes erroneous if the two general principles mentioned above are ignored (word order and “signification”). The interpreter of God’s words must pay strict attention to the details of words and word order. They cannot be ignored. Thomas Hartwell Horne’s ten “principles to be employed in the interpretation of words”<sup>5</sup> give excellent guidance to the expositor and translator of Scripture. His principles quoted below are found in Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost’s book, *Things To Come*, page thirty-four.

## The Sense of Words in Passages

### Horne’s Principle 1

Ascertain the *usus loquendi*, or notion affixed to a word by the persons in general, by whom the language either is now or formerly was spoken, and especially in the particular connection in which such notion is affixed.

This is a very important principle. The use of a word by the penmen of the Holy Scripture must be ascertained before an accurate interpretation can ensue. A classic example of this principle can be illustrated by the oft wrong interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:10. In this verse, the use of the word, “perfect,” by Paul must be examined as well as its use by other penmen of Scripture. Paul uses the word in 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 14:20 to refer to the inspired Scripture making a believer “perfect,” or complete. Wisdom and understanding mentioned in these verses recorded by Paul references the maturing of man from studying the Scriptures (e.g. Proverbs 9:10) to make him “perfect.” Similarly, in the other letters penned by Paul, he always uses the Greek word **tel eiōj**, which is translated in English by the word “perfect,” in combination with phrases that indicate that the use of Scripture provides wisdom and understanding. Therefore, Paul was indicating in 1 Corinthians 13:10 that when the Scriptures were complete, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, present “in part” at the time of writing 1 Corinthians, would be available for a man to be ‘perfect.’ Finally, Paul’s use of the word perfect (**tel eiōw**) in 2 Corinthians 12:9 suggests that God’s strength is “revealed” in a ‘weak’ man, just as Scripture is a special revelation from an Almighty God to assist a ‘weak’ man.

Louis Berkhof believes that the *usus loquendi* becomes the most important principle when evaluating “separate words.” He would place the etymological meaning of words lower in his list of importance. He states:

“The etymological meaning of the words deserves attention first, not as being the most important for the exegete, but because it logically precedes all other meanings...This work is extremely difficult, and can, ordinarily be left to the

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<sup>5</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come, A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1964) 34.

specialists. Moreover, the etymological meaning of a word does not always shed light on its current signification.”<sup>6</sup> [HDW, my emphasis]

Berkhof relates that:

“In the study of the separate words, the most important question is not that of their etymological meaning, nor even that of the various significations which they gradually acquired. The essential point is that of their particular sense in the connection in which they occur. The interpreter must determine whether the words are used in their general or in one of their special significations, whether they are employed in a literal or in a figurative sense.”<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, we have agreement in the order of the principles listed by Horne and Berkhof; *usus loquendi* comes first, followed by other less important principles.

Great significance is attributed to the inductive study of Scripture by Horne, Pentecost, and Berkhof in their writings. We must, as interpreters and translators of God’s words, begin with the precise meaning of words as recorded by the individual penman of Scripture. The liberality of dynamic equivalent translations, which substitutes semantics for precision, or logic for accuracy, or reasoning for faithfulness to the *usus loquendi* of words must be shunned.

## Received Signification

### Horne’s Principle 2

The received signification of a word is to be retained unless weighty and necessary reasons require that it should be abandoned or neglected.

This principle is important to translators, interpreters, and students of God’s words. The translators of the King James Bible struggled with maintaining consistency in words translated into English for the same word in Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek, yet they were cognizant of the shades of meaning in different passages determined by the theological meaning, cultural influences, and the appropriate precise English word. Therefore, they were not locked into the *same* words in English translated for the same Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek words with every occurrence of them in Scripture. Listen to their comment in the “Preface” to the 1611 King James Bible.

“Another things we think good to admonish thee of (gentle Reader) that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done, because they observe, that some learned men somewhere, have been as exact as they could that way. Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified that same in both places (for there be some words that be not the same sense everywhere) we were especially careful, and made a conscience, according to our duty. But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by PURPOSE, never to

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<sup>6</sup> Louis Berkhof, op. cit., 67.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 74.

call it INTENT; if one where JOURNEYING, never TRAVELING; if one where THINK, never SUPPOSE; if one where PAIN, never ACHE; if one where JOY, never GLADNESS, etc..."<sup>8</sup>

An interpreter of Scripture must be careful not to assume the same word used in a passage has exactly the same meaning in every passage of Scripture. However, the interpreter must realize the Bible is a lexicon and that the inspired words of God will help define the "signification of a word" in Scripture. It is this author's belief that Horne meant and understood this concept when he used the word "received" in principle two quoted above (cf. John 17:8). "Received" words mean the words of special revelation from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

An example of this principle may be seen in the translation of the Greek word, **il as thrion** (hilasterion). In Romans 3:25, it is translated propitiation, and in Hebrews 9:5, it is translated mercy seat. The "signification" of the word given by the Holy Spirit changed from one passage to the other passage in English.

David L. Cooper's well known quote from *The God Of Israel* guides us to the correct approach to passages in Scripture saying:

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."<sup>9</sup>

## Context and Words

### Horne's Principle 3

Where a word has several significations in common use, that must be selected which best suits the passage in question, and which is consistent with an author's known character, sentiments, and situation, and the known circumstances under which he wrote.

The Scripture clearly states that we are to "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Timothy 1:13). Please notice that Paul uses the words, "heard of me," and "committed unto thee."

This is the principle that must be applied to the Apostle John's use of the Greek word, **arxh**, translated "beginning" in 1 John 1:1. The question of interpretation arises immediately. Is John referring to the beginning of creation, the beginning at the time of the Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation and birth, or to the beginning of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry at about the age of thirty? The use of the word **arxh** by John in various passages indicates that he means 'from creation' (cf. John 1:1-2, 1 John 2:7, 2:13, 2 John 1:5, 6; Revelation 1:8, etc.). The physician, Luke, on the other hand means from the beginning of the church in Acts 11:15. Paul uses the word for entirely different

<sup>8</sup> H. D. Williams, M.D., *Word-For-Word Translating The Received Text, Verbal Plenary Translating* (Bible For Today Press, Collingswood, NJ, 2006) 32.

<sup>9</sup> Dwight J. Pentecost, op. cit., 42 (TTC)

“significations” [cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 versus Titus 3:1 versus Hebrews 3:14 (this author believes Paul wrote Hebrews)]. The principle is inductive reasoning; that is, one starts with the words, proceeds to the verse, the passage, the book or books written by the penman of the passage, and then extends to the whole counsel of Scripture. Scripture does not contradict Scripture, so consistency from passage to passage must be maintained when the final interpretation is concluded. The interpretation of words used by the penman of Scripture to establish doctrine will not conflict with the specific meaning of words written by the various penmen, even though their use of words may differ. The new versions on the market have many conflicting passages, but the “old paths” Bibles such as the KJB are accurate and faithful without contradictions.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Joseph Angus affirms the importance of this principle. He states:

Ascertain, FIRST, the sense which the words to be examined bear in other parts of the same author, and then in other writings of the same date, and then throughout the Bible. The meaning of words often changes. And all writers do not use the same word in the same sense.”<sup>11</sup>

## The Principle of Etymology

### Horne’s Principle 4

Although the force of particular words can only be derived from etymology, yet too much confidence must not be placed in that frequently uncertain science; because the primary signification of a word is frequently very different from its common meaning.

Thomas Horne is right on target with this principle. There are many lexicons, dictionaries, and books on etymology which have been corrupted by man.

“Greater weight is given to subjective opinions in men’s books (like lexicons, dictionaries, and Doctored New Testament footnotes) than to the providential care and safekeeping of God himself...The Bible itself states in 2 Peter 1:20 that the scriptures are of no “private interpretation.” The primary definition of the word “interpretation,” as used in the New Testament, is ‘to translate from one language to another’ (Matt. 1:23, Mark 5:41, 15:22, 34, John 1:38, 41, 42, 9:7, Acts 4:36, 9:36, 13:8, 1 Cor. 12:10).”<sup>12</sup>

It is not well known, but Gerhard Kittel, the author of the ten volume *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, was Hitler’s theologian. Kittel was tried and convicted for his part in the destruction of two thirds of Europe’s Jewish population. Kittel’s dictionary is still widely promoted and sold by Christian book distributors. He started

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<sup>10</sup> H. D. Williams, *The Lie That Changed the Modern World, A Refutation of the Modernist Cry, Poly-Scripturae* (Bible For Today Press, Collingswood, NJ, 2004) 335 – 337 demonstrates the contradictory passages. This information may also be found J. P. Green’s, *Unholy Hands on the Bible*, written by Wilbur N. Pickering, 556 -561

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Angus, op. cit., 203

<sup>12</sup> G. A. Riplinger, *In Awe of Thy Word, Understanding the King James Bible, The Mystery and History, Letter by Letter* (A. V. Publications Corp., Ararat, VA, 2003) 495.

work on the dictionary the same year that he began working for Hitler, and he is the chief architect for ‘racial science.’<sup>13</sup>

Also, Dr. Edward Hills, a Princeton and Yale scholar, writes about the deficiencies of Greek and Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons. Here are some of the reasons:

“1) *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon’s* editor (Briggs) was defrocked by the ‘liberal’ Presbyterian Church for his ‘liberalism. 2) Trench, author of the much used *Synonyms of the New Testament*, was a member of Westcott’s esoteric clubs, as was Alford, whose Greek reference works are still used. 3) J. Henry Thayer, author of the *New Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, was a Unitarian who vehemently denied the deity of Christ. (Thayer was also the dominant member of the ASV committee!) His Lexicon contains a seldom noticed warning by the publisher in its Introduction (p. vii). It cautions readers to watch for adulterations in the work relating to the deity of Christ and the Trinity. 4) The acclaimed A. T. Robertson’s *Greek Grammar* also sends up a red flag in its preface saying, “The text of Westcott and Hort is followed in all its essentials.” 5) Conclusions drawn by Kurt and Barbara Aland of the *Nestles-Aland Greek New Testament* elicit the response by Phillip Comfort that “the Alands’ designation must be taken with caution.” 6) James Strong, author of *Strong’s Concordance* was a member of the corrupt ASV Committee. Hills summarizes: “Undeniably these unbelievers know a great many facts by virtue of God’s common grace. They misrepresent these facts, however because they ignore and deny God’s revelation of Himself in and through the facts.”<sup>14</sup>

We must be very careful in these ‘last days’ that we do not add to the problems of ‘interpretation’ or ‘translation’ because of the depth and extent of corruption in dictionaries and lexicons. We must be diligent. We must turn to the words in the Bible, and use the inscripturated words as a lexicon. God defines His words for us. In those rare occurrences of the single use of a word in Scripture, usually the context will reveal the meaning. On occasion, extensive lexicography work must be done by the specialist.<sup>15</sup>

## Be Careful With Synonyms

### Horne’s Principle 5

The distinctions between words, which are apparently synonymous, should be carefully examined and considered.

Synonyms are used with proclivity in the writing of most authors, including the author of this work. As an interpreter of God’s words, we need to be certain, that the translation of the passage being considered is an accurate reflection of the precise meaning of the words in the inspired text. An example of words, chosen by different translations that *supposedly* reflect synonyms of a particular Greek word used, is found in Romans 6:19. The KJB translates the Greek word, **anomia** (anomia), as iniquity. Strictly speaking, the word means ‘without law.’ Iniquity is also a synonym for ‘without law’ in English, and the precise meaning is given and defined by the best English translation of the original text, the KJB. Iniquity is sin secondary to refusing to follow God’s law. It is

<sup>13</sup> G. A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (A. V. Publications Corp., Ararat, VA, 1993) 591-593.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 601 (Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*).

<sup>15</sup> Berkhof, op. cit., 67.

lawlessness; it is exaltation of our “own way,” which is called iniquity in Scripture (cf. Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 7:21-23). The new versions not only miss the definition given in the Scriptures, they use words which are not synonyms. For example, in the NLT, impurity and lawlessness are a translation of the same underlying Greek word in Romans 6:19. Impurity may result from lawlessness, but it is not a synonym. Similarly, the NIV uses the words impurity and wickedness. Below are the verses compared in chart form. The words highlighted are the words illustrated for this example. However, there are several other words in this one verse, which could be used as examples (e.g. *ασθενειαν* that is translated infirmity by the KJB, but significantly different by the other versions; and the words are not synonyms. It is not verbal plenary translating by the modern versions.)

VERSION OR GREEK TEXT	VERSE: Romans 6:19
Textus Receptus	ανθρωπινον λεγω δια την ασθενειαν της σαρκος υμων ωσπερ γαρ παρεστησατε τα μελη υμων δουλα τη ακαθαρσια και τη <b>ανομια</b> εις την <b>ανομιαν</b> ουτως νυν παραστησατε τα μελη υμων δουλα τη δικαιοσυνη εις αγιασμον
KJB	I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to <b>iniquity</b> unto <b>iniquity</b> ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.
NLT	I speak this way, using the illustration of slaves and masters, because it is easy to understand. Before, you let yourselves be slaves of <b>impurity</b> and <b>lawlessness</b> . Now you must choose to be slaves of righteousness so that you will become holy.
NIV	I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to <b>impurity</b> and to <b>ever-increasing wickedness</b> , so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

Louis Berkhof gives great insight into the importance of synonyms and antonyms. He says:

“The languages in which the Bible was written are also rich in synonyms and synonymous expressions. It is to be regretted that these were not retained in the translations to a greater extent. In some cases this was quite impossible, but in



others it might have been done. But even though some of the finer distinctions were lost in translation, the interpreter may never lose sight of them. He must have an open eye for all the related ideas of the Bible, and be quick to notice what they have in common and wherein they differ. This is the sine qua non of a discriminating knowledge of the Biblical revelation."<sup>16</sup>

There are many examples. Consider the use of **agapaw** (agapao) and **filew** (phileo) in Scripture, which are translated love by the KJB. Is there a difference (cf. the Greek words behind John 5:20 and 1 Peter 3:10, John 16:27 and 1 John 3:10, 1 Corinthians 16:22 and 1 John 4:20, Titus 2:4 and Ephesians 5:25 plus Colossians 3:19, Titus 3:4 and Ephesians 5:28)?<sup>17</sup>

## Word(s) that Are Adjectival (Epithets)

### Horne's Principle 6

The epithets introduced by the sacred writers are also to be carefully weighed and considered, as all of them have either a declarative or explanatory force, or serve to distinguish one thing from another, or unite these two characters together.

Epithets are often 'thought of' by the modern generation as racial slurs (e.g. "a American Indian is derisively called an 'apple,' red on the outside, white on the inside).<sup>18</sup> Words on a tombstone, called an epitaph, which adjectivally describe the summary of a person's life in a few words, are epithets. Many tombstones may have a descriptive title, which alludes to the name as being an epithet (e.g. Richard the Lionhearted). Certainly the name David (i.e. King David, house of David, throne of David, etc.) is a very descriptive term in Scripture, which may be used typically, also (e.g. Isaiah 55:3-4, Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23-24). In Scripture, figures of speech such as a metaphor, synecdoche, metonym, or proper names may be an epithet. Principle six by Horne is apropos to word-for-word translating, because changing the words or word order of an epithet will destroy the final application to the situation, event, or person. If the words are changed in any way, the interpretation changes dramatically. Would you like the possible epithet on your tombstone, "man of God" derisorily changed to "god of man?"

Hebrews 4:8 is an excellent example of the importance of names in Scripture, which function as descriptive epithets.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, the text is referring to Joshua, but the received text has Jesus, which is the Greek name for the Hebrew, Yehoshua, often translated Joshua in the Old Testament by the Septuagint. There has been much criticism of Hebrews 4:8 by expositors. Adam Clarke's Commentary on Hebrews 4:8 says,

For if Jesus had given them rest - It is truly surprising that our translators should have rendered the Ἰησοῦς of the text Jesus, and not Joshua, who is most clearly intended. They must have known that the *עֲשׂוּיָהּ* *Yehoshua* of the Hebrew, which we write Joshua, is everywhere rendered Ἰησοῦς, Jesus, by the Septuagint; and it is their

<sup>16</sup> Berkhof, op. cit., 71.

<sup>17</sup> G. A. Riplinger, op. cit., *New Age Bible Versions*, 602.

<sup>18</sup> An excellent discussion of "epithet" may be found at this website: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epithet>

<sup>19</sup> Encarta Dictionary defines epithet as (linguistics) a descriptive word or phrase added to or substituted for the name of a person or thing, highlighting a characteristic feature or quality.

reading which the apostle follows. It is true the Septuagint generally write Ἰησοῦς Νάυη , or Υἱὸς Νάυη , Jesus Nave, or Jesus, son of Nave, for it is thus they translate יהושוע בן נון *Yehoshua ben Nun*, Joshua the son of Nun; and this is sufficient to distinguish it from Jesus, son of David. But as Joshua, the captain general of Israel, is above intended, the word should have been written Joshua, and not Jesus. One MS., merely to prevent the wrong application of the name, has Ἰησοῦς τοῦ Νάυη , Jesus the son of Nave. Theodoret has the same in his comment, and one Syriac version has it in the text. It is Joshua in Coverdale's Testament, 1535; in Tindal's 1548; in that edited by Edmund Becke, 1549; in Richard Cardmarden's, Rouen, 1565; several modern translators, Wesley, Macknight, Wakefield, etc., read Joshua, as does our own in the margin. What a pity it had not been in the text, as all the smaller Bibles have no marginal readings, and many simple people are bewildered with the expression.

One of the points that is missed in this comment by Clarke<sup>20</sup> on the epithets, David and Jesus, is the purposeful ambiguity and the lexicographical importance of the passage. Jesus, the preincarnate Saviour, *or* Joshua, the son of Nun, did not provide the final rest of believers at the period of time referred to by the passage. Descriptions of King David's era imply that nearly 500 years later the 'final' rest had *not* come (cf. Acts 7:45, Psalm 44, 2 Samuel 6:2-15). The Lord Jesus Christ (i.e. Jesus) did not allow final rest, and so, Joshua (i.e. Jesus) could not provide it. The words, **dabid** (David) and **Ihs ouj** (Jesus), provide great descriptive and explanatory force in Hebrew 4:8. Also, the KJB translators were very consistent, and always translated **Ihs ouj** as Jesus nine hundred and thirty-five times. This is precise verbal plenary translating. Finally, it is a place in Scripture where the careful student may discover that Joshua (meaning saviour) is a synonym for Jesus (meaning saviour). It indicates that Joshua in the Old Testament functioned as a type of the antitype, Jesus.

This also provides an opportunity to emphasize the important differences in the gospel epithets. They are not contradictory as some claim, but they embellish and add facts to the life and time of Jesus. The principles of hermeneutics applied to the parallel accounts in the gospels quickly reveal the importance of the words in the "epithets," or descriptive phrases, describing the gospel accounts (e.g. John 6:18 "great wind" versus Matthew 14:24 "the wind was contrary").

The sense of the words creating the 'figures of speech' or 'trope' must be determined from the context of the text. They may function as epithets. For example, in the Scripture the titles Judah, lamb (of God), vine, branch, sea, water, lion, etc. may take on the character of an "epithet" (adjectival). In general, trope, types, or "figures of speech" are used as means of revealing literal truth."<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, parallel passages, and parallelism, including synonymous and antithetic parallelism, become important to interpretation of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek words or translation of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Hebrew words (i.e. the words should not be changed), and similarly, epithets are influenced by parallel passages and parallelism. Change the words and the meaning changes. Change the words and the epithet changes. Change the words and parallel passages and parallelism are corrupted.

<sup>20</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography: Volume Two* (The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA, Reprint 1995) 342. Spurgeon comments on Dr. Adam Clarke's "lengthy but not commendatory notes."

<sup>21</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, op. cit., 12

## General and Specific Meaning of Words

### Horne's Principle 7

General terms are used sometimes in their whole extent, and sometimes in a restricted sense, and whether they are to be understood in the one way or in the other must depend upon the scope, subject-matter, context, and parallel passages.

An excellent example of this principle is the use of the term, Jacob, by the Scriptures. Jacob was the son of Isaac, and the use of the word Jacob often refers to the son. This would be the restricted sense. However, throughout the Scripture, Jacob is a term that is used for Israel also (e.g. Psalm 24:6, 44:4). *Barnes Notes* indicates the reference to Jacob refers to the “race of Jacob” or the Jews in some places.<sup>22</sup> However, this would not apply to Psalm 59:13, where it refers to the nation Israel and specifically to God's rule from Zion. The latter uses of the word Jacob would be the general extent. In this work and the work of others, one must be careful whether a term is being used in a restricted or a general sense. For example, consider the discussion at the beginning of this work about translation and interpretation.

## The Principle of the Plain Sense of Scripture

### Horne's Principle 8

Of any particular passage the most simple sense—or that which most readily suggests itself to an attentive and intelligent reader, possessing competent knowledge—is in all probability the genuine sense of meaning.

The words used by a penman of Scripture in a passage become paramount for understanding the “sense of the meaning” (see Leland Ryken's quote above) of the passage. Too many try to make a passage of Scripture carry a meaning not intended by the author, God. God does not try to confuse, complicate, or obscure the message to man. He has presented it in a form, which is clear, precise, coherent, and eternal. It applies to all cultures, all situations, all men, and all spiritual affairs. Our understanding is clouded by sin, which influences our linguistic abilities and clouds the simple sense of Scripture. All too often, we read into the words, or rather exegete a passage, and arrive at a conclusion not intended by Scripture (e.g. ‘snake handlers’ based on Mark 16:18). Seek the plain sense of Scripture and no other sense!

## Rendering Words in Translation

### Horne's Principle 9

Since it is the design of interpretation to render in our own language the same discourse which the sacred authors originally wrote in Hebrew or Greek, it is evident that our interpretation or version, to be correct, ought not to affirm or deny more than

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<sup>22</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes* (SwordSearcher, Version 4.8.1.2, Broken Arrow, OK ) comments on Psalm 24:6.

the inspired penmen affirmed or denied at the time they wrote; consequently we should be more willing to take a sense from Scripture than to bring one of it.

This is a *sine qua non* of translating. In this principle, Horne alludes to the *specific* meaning of interpretation, VPT. It can only be achieved by verbal plenary translating. We must “render” in the receptor-language the precise meaning of words from the VPP and VPI source-languages of Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek. Horne says,

We shall be justified in rejecting the received meaning [etymology] of a word in the following cases, viz.: (1) If such meaning clash with any doctrine clearly revealed in the scriptures. (2) If a certain passage requires a different explanation from that which it appears to present: as Mal. iv.5,6 compared with Luke i.17, and Matt. Xi.14. [HDW, my addition for clarity]

Dynamic equivalent translating abandons this principle (viz. principle 9) at will. There are many examples in the new versions. One example, from a very poor ‘rendering’ called *The Message*, will suffice. It is no excuse no matter for what purpose Eugene Patterson “rendered” the Holy Scriptures. In the KJB, 1 Timothy 4:1 states:

“...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils,”

Eugene Peterson’s version, *The Message*, states:

“...as time goes on, some are going to give up on the faith and chase after demonic illusions put forth by professional liars.”

The change of words substitutes the finite, human traits for occult spiritual influences.<sup>23</sup> Horne’s principle 9 has been greatly violated by this version.

## There Should Be No contradictions in Scripture

### Horne’s Principle 10

Before we conclude upon the sense of a text, so as to prove anything by it, we must be sure that such sense is not repugnant to natural reason.

Some translators use this principle to change the words of Scripture, because a passage in the Bible is offensive to a culture. The words should not be changed in Scripture to accommodate a culture; rather the passage should be explained by footnotes or a glossary. Berkhof has said:

“But though it be true that *the interpreter* must be perfectly free in his labors, he *should not confuse his freedom with licentiousness* He is indeed, free from all external restrictions and authority, but he is not free from the laws inherent in the object of his interpretation. In all his expositions he is bound by that which is written, and *has no right to ascribe his thoughts to the authors*. This principle is generally

<sup>23</sup> Berit Kjos, “What Kind of Message is the Message?” ([www.crossroad.to/Bible\\_studies/Message.html](http://www.crossroad.to/Bible_studies/Message.html)) Many examples of distortions, corruptions, etc. from *The Message* can be found at this website.

recognized today. It is quite different, however, when the position is maintained that *the freedom of the interpreter is also limited by the fact that the Bible is the inspired, and therefore self-consistent, Word of God.*"<sup>24</sup> [HDW, The emphasis is by Berkhof.]

The principle may be recognized, but it is certainly not followed today. There has been a clear abandonment by modern versions of all of the principles addressed in this chapter. Man has brought his 'opinions' into the translations (i.e. perversions) or versions that are sweeping the world, and the works are filled with contradictions, doctrinal abandonment, and negation of vast coherent and meaningful passages found in previous literal, verbal plenary translations (e.g. KJB, Tyndale, Geneva, Luther's German Bible) of God's Words. The result is poor exegesis of poor translations resulting in poor doctrine and poor applications. This travesty has produced confusion galore.

May translators all over the world abandon translating "licentiousness," and return to VERBAL PLENARY TRANSLATING, because:

"The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking."<sup>25</sup>

And

"[t]herefore, the literal method must be accepted as the basic method for right interpretation in any field of doctrine today."<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Pentecost's quotes could be interpreted either in the *general* or the *specific* sense of the word, interpretation (i.e. the science of hermeneutics or VPT). The point that needs to be made is that the method of interpretation is set in "stone" by the Scriptures and by the historical evidence of the literal method used by men of God from "the beginning." It is the literal *method*, whether we are speaking about hermeneutics or VPT. The inscripturated Words were given without consultation with man. They were given by the "Rock" (Deut. 32:4) and the record is "sealed" in heaven (Psalm 119:89). The Words are written for man as if they are a letter from a King to His vassals. The Apostle Peter recorded these words.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Peter 1:20-21

Barnes notes make these in-depth comments about this verse, which are revealing. This author believes the interpretation by Albert Barnes is "on the mark."

*is of any private interpretation.* The expression here used (*idia j epil us ewj*) has given rise to as great a diversity of interpretation, and to as much discussion, as perhaps any phrase in the New Testament; and to the present time there is no general agreement among expositors as to its meaning. It would be foreign to the

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<sup>24</sup> Berkhof, op. cit., 66

<sup>25</sup> Pentecost, op. cit. 9

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 33

design of these Notes, and would be of little utility, to enumerate the different interpretations which have been given of the passage, or to examine them in detail. It will be sufficient to remark, preparatory to endeavouring to ascertain the true sense of the passage, that some have held that it teaches that no prophecy can be interpreted of itself, but can be understood only by comparing it with the event; others, that it teaches that the prophets did not themselves understand what they wrote, but were mere passive Organs under the dictation of the Holy Spirit to communicate to future times what they could not themselves explain; others, that it teaches that "no prophecy is of self-interpretation," (*Horsley*;) others, that it teaches that the prophecies, besides having a literal signification, have also a hidden and mystical sense which cannot be learned from the prophecies themselves, but is to be perceived by a peculiar power of insight imparted by the Holy Ghost, enabling men to understand their recondite mysteries. It would be easy to show that some of these opinions are absurd, and that none of them are sustained by the fair interpretation of the language used, and by the drift of the passage. The more correct interpretation, as it seems to me, is that which supposes that the apostle teaches that the truths which the prophets communicated were not originated by themselves; were not of their own suggestion or invention; were not their own opinions, but were of higher origin, and were imparted by God; and according to this the passage may be explained, "knowing this as a point of first importance when you approach the prophecies, or always bearing this in mind, that it is a great principle in regard to the prophets, that what they communicated *was not of their own disclosure*; that is, was not revealed or originated by them..."  
 {\*} "interpretation" "Is from a man's own invention"

Barnes uses the *general* meaning of interpretation, which is the theological science of hermeneutics. It behooves us to conclude this chapter with a circumspective and introspective examination of our belief in the origin of the Words of God. Hopefully, every interpreter or translator of Scripture has climbed to the mountain top of VPI, VPP, and VPT, has looked over the edge, has seen the glory of God in His Letter to man, and has "profound reverence" for the Words of the Logos.

May God bless and empower the brave men and women who are literal translators of the VPI and VPP Words of God, who are traversing the highways and byways of many foreign lands, and who "publish<sup>27</sup> with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." Psalms 26:7 (cf. Psalm 111:7-8) [HDW, my emphasis]

Amen!!

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<sup>27</sup> Strong's 8085 (from SwordSearcher, version 4.8.1.2, Broken Arrow, OK, 2006) emv shama primitive root; to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc.; causatively, to tell, etc.):--X attentively, call (gather) together, X carefully, X certainly, consent, consider, be content, declare, X diligently, discern, give ear, (cause to, let, make to) hear(-ken, tell), X indeed, listen, make (a) noise, (be) obedient, obey, perceive, (make a) proclaim(-ation), publish, regard, report, shew (forth), (make a) sound, X surely, tell, understand, whosoever (heareth), witness.