

Gospel of Grace Fellowship Sunday School 6/26/22 Bible Translation Presentation

Figurative language

- Language NOT used literally
- Used in poetry, but also in prophetic material, and even narrative
- Always evokes a comparison or close connection with something else

Used to:

- 1) clarify or explain an idea
- 2) catch the attention of the hearer and make the message more vivid and memorable to him,
- 3) and/or arouse a response in the hearers.

Metaphors and Similes

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Discovering Meaning of Metaphors and Similes

- (a) 1 Kings 4:20 The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore; (GNB)
- (b) Psalm 18:2 The Lord is my rock . . . in whom I take refuge.
- (c) Isaiah 51:6 . . . the heavens will vanish like smoke, . . .
- (d) Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
- (e) Hebrews 11:12 . . . descendants as many as the stars of heaven . . .
- (f) James 4:14 For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.
- (g) Revelation 1:14 his head and his hair were as white wool, white as snow;

But sometimes one part is missing

- (a) Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- (b) Proverbs 11:22 Like a gold ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.
- (c) Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.
- (d) Isaiah 44:22 I have swept away . . . your sins like mist;
- (e) Matthew 17:20 . . . if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, . . .
- (f) Mark 1:17 . . . I will make you fishers of men. (NIV)
- (g) John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; . . .
- (h) James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire.

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Illustrations may have more than one point of similarity

Isaiah 53:6 All we like SHEEP have *gone astray*;

Isaiah 53:7 . . . like a SHEEP that before its shearers is dumb, so *he opened not his mouth*.

Jeremiah 12:3 Pull them out like SHEEP for the *slaughter*, . . .

Micah 2:12 I will set them together like SHEEP in the fold, like a flock in its pasture, *a noisy multitude* of men.

Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you out as [*defenceless*] SHEEP in the midst of wolves; . . .

Point of Similarity sometimes isn't what you expect

Revelation 3:3 . . . I will come like a thief, . . . The meaning is that Jesus will come *unexpectedly*. His coming is not like the coming of a thief in any other way.

Matthew 28:3 His appearance was like lightning, . . . In English, we tend to associate “lightning” with speed, as in the expression “as quick as lightning”; in the context of Matthew 28:3, however, it is the *brightness* of lightning which is in focus. The context makes this clear, and the parallel passage in Luke 24:4 confirms it.

John 1:29 “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” The POINT OF SIMILARITY between Jesus and the lamb is that, in the Jewish religion, the lamb was the animal sacrificed to atone for sins, the sacrificial lamb itself being without any blemish. Compare 1 Peter 1:18, 19: “. . . you were ransomed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” The significance of John’s statement is often missed.

Complex Figures

(a) Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is . . . sharper than any two-edged sword, . . . *The Word of God* is like *a two-edged sword* because . . . in the way that a two-edged sword is sharp and cuts well so the Word of God is penetrating the lives of people.

(b) Mark 1:17 . . . I will make you become fishers of men. *You* will be (like) *fishers* because . . . in the way that a fisherman seeks and catches fish so you will seek people to convince them to follow me (Jesus Christ).

Translation Issue – unknown illustration

(a) Matthew 18:17 . . . and if [your brother] refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

This POINT OF SIMILARITY might need to be made explicit in the translation: . . . if your brother refuses to listen even to the church, *avoid him as you would avoid a Gentile or a tax collector*.

(b) Acts 26:14 It hurts you to kick against the goads.

You are hurting yourself by hitting back, like an ox kicking against its owner’s (driving) stick). (GNB)

(c) 2 Corinthians 11:8 I robbed other churches . . .

Compare: I was robbing them, so to speak, in order to help you. (GNB)

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(d) Romans 3:13 The venom of asps is under their lips.

Compare: . . . and dangerous threats, like snake's poison roll from their lips. (GNB)

Or: The words they speak are like the poison of deadly snakes, bringing death.

(e) 1 Corinthians 15:54 Death is swallowed up in victory.

Compare Death is destroyed; victory is complete. (GNB) (People won't die anymore; they will live forever.)

(f) 1 Peter 2:6 Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, . . .

(1) Substitute whatever might be the equivalent key part of the structure of a house, for example, the central pole of a round house. (This solution might have some problems because of other references to Christ as the "stone", as for example in Ephesians 2:19, 20 and following verses);

(2) Make explicit the function of the cornerstone; for example, the most important stone, or a stone in relation to which all the other stones are fitted firmly in their place.

(g) Colossians 1:18 He is the head of the body, the church; . . . '

The relationship between Christ and his church is like that of the head to the body .

Extended Figurative Language

Parables

Other

1 Cor 9:24-27 (NIV) 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Ledo version:

24 You know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the victory prize. So you too must behave like the runner: strive with all your heart to live pleasing God so that you will receive the prize that He will give. 25 People participating in a race have to learn to control their own selves/bodies in everything. They will do that in order to get a victory prize which doesn't last. But we learn to control our own selves/bodies, so that we will get a prize that will never be destroyed. 26 So that is why I don't live like someone who doesn't know what they should do. A person being trained to run in a race, he doesn't just run randomly.

And a person being trained to box, he doesn't just fight the air. 27 But I learn to control myself/my body so that I do not follow my bad desires. May it not be that after I have proclaimed the Good News to others, I myself would not get that prize which God will give!

**Most of examples taken from BIBLE TRANSLATION : AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES by Katharine Barnwell*