

Menstruous Rags

In early 1993 in a small gathering in our home in Connecticut The Holy Spirit nudged me. “Look up the word ‘appalled.’” (At the time my translation paradigm was the NIV.) This happens to me every now and then. I would say, at least, once a year, on average, and each time it happens it is unusual, in that the significance, importance, and object seems to be different. In this case, to this day, or until Peter came along, I have had no place to put this except for my personal edification.

I didn't obey the Spirit's “nudging” that evening. A few days later, I felt it again, and still didn't obey. Then the third time, the afternoon of the seventh day after the first time, once more I felt it, and this time I obeyed. (I have learned that, by the third time, it's best to obey. :-))

I was shocked when I saw that it was the same word as used in Daniel, and which was such a milepost in Jesus' Olivet discourse. The significance went well beyond just the word. It opened up a whole new understanding of the passage, including the “desolate” woman, our mother of Isaiah 54:1.

It really is important to understand our mother, and not neglect her teaching, Proverbs 1:8, 6:20. Fact is, I have the very strong impression that it is much better to understand our mother, than pay too much attention to a bunch of “wise guys,” Matthew 11:25.

What I would like to do here is to go over what you have written above, using it as an opportunity to open the subject at some greater depth.

You wrote:

“Jay, my brother, your memo to Peter Flint, titled ‘Isaiah,’ has been evoking some silent comment in my head and it's high time to begin to try to verbalize it...”

I think I know the feeling! :-\

“... For me the verbal settings in Daniel 9:26 (shomemot) and Daniel 11:31 (mshomem), on the one hand, and that in Isaiah 52,14, on the other hand,

evidence such differences of import that it induces me to infer a difference of sense to be drawn from the same lexeme shamem...”

Well, as it happens that's exactly what I would like to talk about. :-)

“... The evidence does not make me want to posit the same sense for the Isaiah reference as for the Daniel references...”

Understood, Now, let's see if the over all context insists that it have a different sense.

“... From the germ notion of the root, about like ‘be desolated’ or ‘be devastated,’ could be derived either a concept like physical ruination or a concept like emotional shock, with could take the form of anything from simple amazement to emotional horror...”

We have a word in contemporary jargon which might take care of both, “wasted!” :-)

“... Isaiah 52:14 has the latter sense for shammu, which was treated by OGr = ‘the LXX’ as ekthcovtai = ecstesontae, ‘will be flipped out,’ a predication that has been nominalized, or substantivized in modern English, into the transliteration ‘ecstasy.’ Hence the Vulgate obstipuerunt (< obstipesco = obstupesco ‘am struck dumb’ ‘am stunned,’ cum quo confer ‘stupidus’). Therefore I take that as emotional affection...”

I guess there are all kinds of natural disasters, resulting in all kinds of “desolation.” Perhaps it is possible these too are parables: created visuals or images of things ultimately inward, emotional or spiritual.

“... But the Daniel references, conveying as they do what will be done to holy and fortified locations, clearly imply for me a physical laying waste...”

Yes, I'm sure that this is what was intended, at least, until the fullness of time, and the historical unfolding of the revelation of the mystery. Just as there was a physical temple, a temple built with human hands, and there is a spiritual temple, one not built with human hands. It seems to me that leaves room for both a physical “laying waste,” and a spiritual “laying waste.” *“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.”* 1 Corinthians 15:48

Daniel is an interesting kind of a book as I understand it, lots of pictures that can be taken both literally, and figuratively. For instance, Romans tells us that *“There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first, and also the Greek.”* Romans 2:9.

Isn't this is what Jesus was speaking about in his Olivet discourse, when He used “... the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet...” Matthew 24:15, as the wake up call for tribulation? Perhaps, here again, we see another way to identify our two groups spoken of in my last response email, in this case, “Jews,” and “Greeks.” Clearly there is a priority here, “... the Jew first...”

If this “tribulation” is going to be as bad as Jesus says it is, and as tricky to understand as the text suggests, “(let the reader understand)” then it would be nice to retain as much as possible the connectivity of the original language for the Greeks as well. Looks to me like you are focusing on the desolation of a physical temple. I don't deny that application. My concern is that in making that the focus, the Woman of Isaiah 54:1 is not left in the dust of such a physical desolation. It seems to me she has a desolation of her own. It is her desolation that I am concerned with, and not just what was done in 70AD. (I still like that better than the “BCE,” and “CE” stuff. Daniel 2:21 versus Daniel 7:25. :-\)

“... Plus we must account for the fact that both Matthew 24,15 and Mark 13:14 render Daniel's phrase by the lexeme ephmwic = eremosis, and you will hardly find this Greek noun denoting something emotional rather than physical...”

This takes me back to Ezekiel 16 once again. After God made her His own, Verse 8, she went pretty far astray. Most of the remainder of the Chapter makes this very clear, until we get to Verse 60. Aren't you glad for the coming of Verse 60? :-) Up to that point, one could almost ask the question, “... However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith, (a woman of His own) on the earth?”

I trust there's enough support in the rest of the New Testament letters for me to make such a paraphrase. What I want to suggest by doing so, is that this is not just an “emotional” problem, it is a physical one, physical in the form of a woman. By the time we get close to the end of the Book, the Story, the

Love relationship, that woman is in serious trouble! Again, in Ezekiel 16. The language of the physical is the image of the spiritual. An image is made to be seen, Romans 1:20, "... clearly seen..." When it is not clearly seen, acknowledged, and appreciated the first thing that happens is male/female confusion: Verse 24. This is pretty physical, even if it does speak of the spiritual to the spiritual.

"... From Leviticus 26,34-5 on it was regularly used of the deserted condition of the land or the devastation of the temple at the hands of invaders..."

No argument here. What I am wanting to see is the preservation of language that can bridge the gap between the physical and the spiritual. This is all about Christ and the church! In the end, the church is the "temple!" It is in the church where we see men "... standing where they ought not to be." Mark 13:14, Again: "(let the reader understand)"!

We are the temple of God: Acts 17:24, 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Again, I am not looking to change the wording of the original to suit my understanding, which may certainly be incorrect. I am just wanting the original to be preserved as much as possible in a way that Greeks, as well as Jews, might have some hope of understanding it in light of the greater whole. I don't much care if every Jew from Abraham to John the Baptist understood this desolation to be that of a physical temple. The mystery had not yet been revealed, the revelation of which would put those who were to come later in a position to better understand what the end of the matter would be.

I do not want to spiritualize all the physical implications away, but neither do I want to see earth bound thinking physicalize that, which, in the final analysis, is spiritual. And this goes for, "deserted condition of the land," "the devastation of the temple," and "the hands of invaders..."

"... Even where the verb ephmow = eremoo predicates bereavement or abandonment in standard classical authors, the objects of which the subject one will have been stripped tend to be physical, as when oars may be bereft of men to man them or the grove of Zeus had been made to lack a literal lion..."

Bill I am grateful that you are mindful of the usage of classical authors. All I am saying is that in being mindful of them as a factor in translation, let's not be so mindful that we limit the communication of God in what He ultimately intended for us on whom the end of the age has come.

So here it is one more time, NAS: "Just as many were 'astounded,' (Peter Flint Version), ('made desolate.' my impression) at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."

I see two objects for viewing here either one of which is enough to make the viewer desolate. The first seems to have resulted in the appearance of the second. The condition of the first seems to have resulted in the desolation of the other, 53:4-6. In any case, to see either is enough to make the viewer desolate, at least, that's the way I read the "... just as..." part, 52:14. As between the graphics of viewing God's people, and the graphics of viewing what happens to God's servant, 52:13 it looks to me like the greater cause of desolation is the viewing of God's servant, because right here in context he is described as "... *marred more than any man*," 52:14. This seems to me to be pretty physical.

You mention, "... the objects of which the subject one will have been stripped tend to be physical..."

Don't you think that the stripping at and on the cross of God's "prosperous servant," of Verse 52:13, "... marring him beyond any man..." is physical enough to leave the word "desolate" where God put it? When God asks those to whom the "arm of the Lord has been revealed," "Who has believed our report?" Isn't this a question for every age, and kindred, and tongue, and nation? What is it that Isaiah is talking about here, that some time later had the Ethiopian in need of an explanation? Acts 8:32-35. HELLO! :-\

(Sorry, Bill! You know how it is. Every now and then The Spirit comes on me! :-)) "... Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him,.." Isaiah 52:15. Presumably their mouths shut because of what they have just seen, something they had never heard of before. What they have just seen is enough to make the viewer desolate!

Isn't this what we all need to see? Isn't this the demonstration of The Love of God? Isn't this how we know what love is, as it finds new definition at and

by the cross, in the "... lifting up..." of God's prosperous servant? Isn't this that revelation without which we are not capable of the love of the "new commandment? Isn't the discovery of our own abomination what sets us up for the kind of desolation, designed to make great lovers out of us as well? If "... those who are forgiven much, love much," Isn't our own abomination, and accompanying desolation what positions us to become great lovers? In short, isn't this important enough not to mess around with what God has said, and the words He used?

Isn't this a better place to discover the love of God, than when, "lights are dim and every head is bowed"?

I wonder if "oars bereft of men" are anything like plows that are turned back or if a grove without the lion of Zeus is any worse than a vineyard without the Great Lion of God or "... Rachel weeping for her children..," Jeremiah 31:15.

Perhaps I have said, and asked enough for now.

Bless You!

Jay

After sending these two, I had an after thought, which I also sent along

to Bill:

"Dear Bill,

Something came back to me after sending that last.

In the late 1980s I had the occasion to attend a lecture at Yale presented by a Bishop from Kenya. Toward the end of his remarks he said something that really stuck with me: "The Word of God is so clear, you have to have help to misunderstand it!" (It may be that the exclamation point is just the way I heard it.)

What I wanted to say here is that this alpha male neglect of women is a big part of what fuels Gnosticism/Dan Brown /James Tabor - in the current season, and I believe even from the beginning; "gospel of Mary," etc.

With translations like “filthy” for “menstruous,” and “astounded” for

“desolate,” it is not such a heretical question to ask, “Whatever became of Mary Magdalene?”

Bless You Today!

Jay"