

Today, we have the second part of the story, coming from the *Intertestamental Period*, transitioning from the Old to the New Testament. Last week, we talked about the story from this period by focusing on the God of the Old Testament, דַבָּר (Dabar), the God who *speaks*. Today, we will focus on the God of the New Testament, Τετέλεσται (Tetelestai), the God who *finishes*.

The *Intertestamental Period* is known as the "400 silent years" because no prophetic word from God was recorded during the period from the Prophet Malachi to John the Baptist. Being in silence or having no record does not mean that nothing happened. During this *Intertestamental Period*, we do indeed enter into a radically changed world with lots of happenings.

Let me briefly explain the context of the *Intertestamental Period*. Alexander the Great united a larger portion of the earth and required the Greek language and culture to be taught and followed in all conquered lands. He allowed religious freedom but promoted Greek lifestyles. The Greek language became the common language to use daily. Over time Jews outside of Jerusalem ceased to understand Hebrew, but only Greek.

In this political, religious, and social context, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was commissioned to give access to the Hebrew Bible to those Jews who did not speak Hebrew. The Hebrew Bible's translation began with 72 Greek-speaking Jews living in Egypt, which, over time, became 70. Because of the number of translators involved, the Greek Bible is also called the Septuagint (LXX), which means "70" in Latin.

Given that the language of the early Christian church was Greek, many early Christians relied on the Greek Bible to locate the prophecies they claimed were fulfilled by Christ. During the *Intertestamental Period*, God was active in shaping the world into which Jesus was born and finished God's mission, particularly with the translation of the Hebrew Bible into the Greek Bible. So, what God said in the Old Testament was fulfilled by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The Emmanuel God of the Bible is the God of integrity who carries out what He said until its completion.

From today's story, we can see that the Bible is contextual. When it comes to the art of translating from one language to another, there is always a possibility of losing some meaning because the direct translation does not work. For example, the word "to wear" in English can be translated into many different terms in Korean. "To wear" in wearing shirts is 입다 (ip-da), in wearing shoe 신다 (shin-da), in wearing a tie 묶다 (Mook-da), and so on. When I asked my Tongan and Samoan siblings to translate some words into Tongan or Samoan, they often said there is no word for it, but they responded this way. And then, they gave me a long sentence for one English word.

So, coming back to the Bible translation talk, which translation of the Bible is "the authentic Bible" we need to quote when we say, "the Bible says it so?" As of September 2020, the Bible has been translated into 704 languages. In Kenya, "the Lamb of God" is translated to "the Goat of God." If we say that we believe the Bible as it is written literally, then is our Lord "the Lamb of God" or "the Goat of God?" How about "the eye of a needle" in Matthew 19:24? It is translated as "the ear of a needle," 바늘귀 (ba-nul-gi) in Korean. Does the needle have eyes or ears?

The point I am trying to make here is that we cannot take the Bible literally a word-by-a word. We need to read the Bible text contextually because what God said in the Old Testament was contextual. Also, it was carried out to its completion in the New Testament contextually. What Jesus did in the New Testament was to translate what God said in the Old Testament into New Testament contexts.

According to Galatians 2:20, we, the followers of Jesus Christ, have been crucified with Christ, and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us. This means that the Christ who lives in us is available to help us translating the text we read in the Bible contextually. How do we allow the Christ in us to help us to translate the Scripture for us and for others? How does the Christ in us translate the phrase "God is Love" for us and for others? And what do we do about it? The answer is ours. Amen.