

Dr. George Payton, Bible Translation, Session 17,

Review of Translation Steps

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This is Dr. George Payton and his teaching on Bible translation. This is session 17, Review of Translation Steps.

In this talk, we will be covering a review of the translation process, the translation steps, and what you go through when you do the translation.

Previously, we just reviewed translation issues and transition best practices. Now, we're going to go through the process and just repeat and reemphasize some of the things that we talked about in previous lectures so that they can then refresh us and get us ready for the topics that are coming up after this one. Okay, so when you translate, the whole process begins with understanding the source text, that is, the biblical text, and all of its cultural nuances, all of its semantic meaning, the language that's used, and the pragmatic implications.

We have to properly interpret biblical texts in order to produce quality translations. If you do not have a quality interpretation, you will not end up with a quality translation. It will not be accurate, it will not be faithful to the original text.

And we can't translate what we don't understand. And so, the task is, well, just go to the Greek. What does the Greek say? Well, that's partly the answer.

Or we'll just read the commentaries, and it'll tell you what it means. The problem that I ran into when I was translating the book of Genesis was that the commentator didn't talk about some of the things that I was wrestling with, like how do you render this particular phrase in order? Well, what's the problem? Well, the problem is that there's a grammatical issue that inhibits me from being able to do that. Well, the commentators don't talk about that.

Okay. So, this is why we're glad to know that Bible Translation Organizations have developed help study guides and other translation literature materials specifically designed to clue the translators into these gaps in communication, to these different translation difficulties, and then suggestions on how to work around the text. So it's necessary to have both commentaries, a knowledge of Greek and a knowledge of Hebrew, and the translation helps in order to effectively interpret the text and to effectively communicate the text.

But you can't translate what you don't understand. So, the biggest challenge in understanding the Bible is understanding what was meant but not said. It's

understanding what the author assumed his audience would get, but he didn't have to say it, because of this cryptic communication principle that we talked about.

In short, our goal is then to understand these gaps in communication. The problem is we can't understand the gaps if we don't see the gaps. If you don't realize the gap is there, then you will overlook it and not realize that it doesn't communicate the message.

I had a colleague ask me one time how I could see something that was not there. That's a really good question. How do you discover that the author actually meant something different than what's on the page? For example, if my wife, my kids, and I are at the dinner table and they say there's no salt on the table, that is a statement of fact. Thank you very much.

Gee, Dad, you're very perceptive. What do I mean by that? Somebody needs to get up and get the salt. Or, sweetheart, can you please go get the salt or one of my children?

Or if I say to my wife, just before we go to work in the morning, honey, we're out of milk. And she says, I'll go by the store on my way home. What did I say to her? Would you please get some milk at the store? She didn't say milk.

She said I'll go by the store on my way home. But that communication was connected, and it goes way beyond just what we said to what we meant. And this is what we try to do: how do we get to the information behind the text that's not explicit? How do we get to these gaps? Sorry, that should be five W's and an H. I'll correct that in my slide.

Five W's and an H. You start by asking questions of the text. So, look at the text, and we start asking ourselves, do I understand this text? And so, what do we ask? We ask, well, who? Who did this action? Who is they? Remember, we ran into that problem in Genesis 14:10. They fell in the tar pits, and they escaped the hills. Who were they in that particular passage? How was the person or the people in the passage referred to throughout the passage? One of the things that we discovered in certain languages in Africa is that the person who is the main character gets referred to as he or she.

It's the pronoun, not the person's name, and it's not that it's a man or a woman or a lady. And we call that the center of attention. Speaking of videography, it would be the one in which the camera is always on.

And it was the deictic center of the communication. And so, Jesus is that deictic center. And sometimes it'll say, he went to the synagogue, and he sat down and began to preach.

And he said, and it just says he, he all the way through. And it's assuming, maybe, that Greek is like these African languages, that the most important person is assumed. Therefore, you don't need to mention it then explicitly.

Now, in this African context, we studied local stories, both personal accounts and folktales. And particularly in the folktales, we discovered that in this one folktale, there was a dog and a cat and a mouse. The mouse is the least important character mentioned; three-quarters of the way through the story, the mouse is mentioned.

And every time the mouse did something or was mentioned, it said the mouse did this, the mouse did this, did not do this. I mentioned the least important character. Okay.

All right. So, if you're translating, and you say, well, we mentioned Jesus did this, and Jesus did that, what are we doing in this other African language? We are demoting Jesus to a minor character. So, something to keep in mind is how these participants are mentioned in the biblical text, and how they should be mentioned in the chartered language text. Okay.

What happened? What is the author talking about? What did he mean by that? So, I asked myself, what is the author talking about? And what did he mean by that? With every verse that I read in the epistles by Paul, Paul is dense. I mean, his writing is very dense and very heavy. To the extent that in 1 Peter, the apostle Peter said, you know, the writings of Paul can be hard to understand.

If it was hard for Peter, who is a native Greek speaker, how about us? Right. Okay. So, what did the author mean by that? Now, where is this happening? And when did it happen? So, we ask these questions to see if we have at least some general orientation to the setting where it happened. Where were they? What time of day was it? All those issues can help us to then understand what's going on in the text.

Again, we need some frame of reference, some kind of overview, or some kind of mental picture of what's going on so that we can then make sense of what it is that we're reading. And if it's hard for us, it'd be hard for our people who read our translations. So, we have to ask ourselves these questions even before we translate.

We need to get these questions in our minds so that we can then understand the text before we go and take the step of transferring it to the other language. Why did the author say this or that? Why did the person do this? Or why did the person do that? And then, how did that happen? Okay. So, we start by asking ourselves those kinds of questions.

We're going to have examples, so all this will come together as we see examples, but I'm trying to preempt us to start thinking about the text in a way that goes beyond what we would assume so that you can then start seeing more than what we assume we know on the surface. Okay. So, we can't answer those types of questions.

It's likely that something has been left out. You ask these questions, and you say, I don't know. It's not clear.

Then we realize we have a problem. And if we have a problem, then that points to the fact that there's a gap in the communication. Okay.

So, again, we need to dig deeper rather than just assuming, well, the text just says that. It's obvious what the text says. And then you start asking these questions, and then you realize, wow, it's not as obvious as I thought it was.

Okay. So, this implied information, these gaps, is probably the most common difficulty in bilingual translation. And why is that? Because translation is communication, and communication is cryptic.

Okay. What do we do after that? We identify what type of gap that it is. And so, is it a figure of speech, idiom, metaphor, comparison, or some of these others? Is it a linguistic difficulty because of the way that they have to say it in one language? Does it fit the way that they say it in another language? For example, less so than we would say in English.

We don't understand how Hebrew or Greek is phrased. So, these linguistic difficulties could be one of the issues out here. We have to understand the cultural assumptions that the reader thought their writer would understand or that the speaker in the text would understand if there's a dialogue going on. What did the speaker in the text assume that the people understood? Do you remember the story of Jesus and the parable of the vineyard, and the vineyard owner was not there?

He gave it, he rented it out to tenant farmers, who then farmed it, and then he would send his people to go and get the produce from that and get money from that. And they beat some, and they killed others, took them away naked, and hid it, and then he says, oh son, my son, and then in sending his son, they said, if we kill the son, then we won't take over the farm, right? At the end of that passage, it says that the Pharisees and the other leaders knew that Jesus was pointing the finger at them, and they got mad about it. How in the world did they know that? Jesus wanted to point the finger at them, and they knew that the finger was being pointed at them, and guess what else? Everyone else in the crowd knew it, too.

He was calling them out. How in the world did that communication happen? It happened because of the way that they communicate in that culture, in a style that's

unique to them, that we on the outside looking in say, I don't get it. Where did they get that idea? Okay, cultural assumptions and uses of language, and all that shared knowledge that we talked about, history, beliefs, worldview, religious practices, situational expectations, all of that is wrapped up in the kind of issue that we're dealing with, and so what do we do after that? Then we research the passage and use all the resources, including commentaries, other Bible dictionaries, translation help, and anything that we can. We use it in order to understand the passage, and sometimes, we will use a number of different versions, so if you read the IV, you'll get one rendering.

If you read the NLT, you'll get another rendering. If you read the ASV, you'll get another rendering, and sometimes the renderings are not totally different, but they make certain things more explicit or more clear, and then you think, oh wow, is that what that really means? Then you look it up in the commentary, and you get some support, yes, this is what that message means, so looking up things in our resources is where we start, including biblical history and a number of other things, so one of the things is words, and what does the word mean in this particular context, and we've dealt with that issue in some of our Q&A songs, and remember, a word does not have, a word does not have meaning. There's an association to this word in the language in the particular given context.

The meaning of words is always context-specific. What does that context then evoke? What is the meaning that comes out in that particular sentence and in that particular social context, both of those are really important. Okay, second of all, grammar.

What does this sentence structure tell us? What are the collocations, or collocations are words that co-occur or are in the same location, co-location, as other words, and we have those examples in a previous lecture, so if you say he gave a ring to his girlfriend, we know that that is a marriage proposal. He gave a ring to his fiancée; you know that they've already been engaged, so just the word fiancée versus girlfriend gives us two different meanings for the situations. Okay, so that's all in the grammar of words.

Historical background: what do they know about their past that we don't know? Cultural information is not being stated or made explicit. What can the scenario tell me? What is the overall setting in trying to step back away from the text, and as if you are in a helicopter looking down onto the scene, and you try to tell yourself, what's going on here, and how can what I see going on, help me to understand parts of the text that may not be clear. You know, we did that when we looked at that Genesis 14 passage, where we said the whole point of the kings fighting kings, and as the kings fighting kings, or armies fight armies, and we said in the scenario, it's obvious that it's a group of armies fighting together, and so that helps us to determine the meaning of one of the pronouns in verse 10.

So, what does that scenario tell us? Okay, and just remember, we're translating the scenario. We're not translating words, we're not translating sentences, we're not translating just paragraphs, we're translating the whole scene, and trying to help the reader get a picture in his or her mind of what's going on in the biblical text. Now, it's not always easy if we just do a straight-up translation so that we've got all the words reflected in the art language, as well as language as words.

Okay, and so what I'd like to do now is just go through some examples, and we're going to revisit. The passage is Genesis 14, and we're going to read through 1 through 12 first, and then I'll come back, and we'll hit some main points. Okay.

And it came about in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal, king of Goiim, that they made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and with Birsha, king of Gomorrah, and the Shinab, king of Adamah, Shember king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, (that is Zohar).

All these allies came as allies to the Valley of Siddim, (that is, the Salt Sea). For 12 years, they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the 14th year, Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-Karnaim, in the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim, in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites, in their Mount Seir, as far as El-Paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En-Mishpat (that is Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who were dwelling in Hazazon-Tamar.

Then the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (that is Zohar), came out, and they arrayed for battle against them in the Valley of Siddim, against Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, Tidal, king of Goiim, Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, four kings against five. Now the valley of Siddim was full of carpets, and the kings of Saran and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them, but those who survived fled to the hill country. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food supply, and departed.

And they also took Lot, Abraham's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.

Okay, that's the whole passage. We want to go back and hit some other translation challenges and translation difficulties because there are some gaps in communication that we may have overlooked.

If we translate this, we could probably just translate word-for-word all the way down, and it seems clear. But there's more to this that could be potentially unclear, even though I don't think so. Let's go back and revisit.

We want to revisit the first seven verses first and let's talk about the text. So, as I talk about it, then you can make notes. And it came about in these days, in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, etc., that they made war with Bera, king of Sodom, etc.

All these allies, all these Cubans, allies to the Valley of Sidim that is, the Salt Sea. Okay, they're getting ready to fight. That sounds exactly like verses 8 and 9, doesn't it? Yeah, almost word-for-word.

So, did they fight twice? I had a discussion in class last semester, and one of the students said it sounded like they fought twice. What's going on? So that's our first question: How many times did they fight? Did they fight once or twice? To answer that question, we need to understand Hebrew literary structure. Hebrew literary structure often gives a general statement and then later comes back and fills in the details.

Actually, in the very next verse, they start filling in the details. Like what? Like in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And then it says what? And the earth was like this before God did this.

So that opening is telling us this is a new episode. We get that all over the place. In Genesis, Jacob was living with his uncle Laban, and married Laban's two daughters.

And then he felt God was leading him to leave. It said, and then Jacob left with his wife and children. And he put his wives on the camels, and he had his servants gather the livestock, and he put his children on the camels.

After they had everything ready, they went out by night while Laban was away. How many times did they leave? Once. That opening verse leads into this new little episode.

I remember in Ruth chapter one says, now Naomi heard that the Lord had favor on his people by giving them food in Bethlehem. So, she left to go back home. And then she gathered her daughters-in-law, and then she was telling them, I'm going back home.

Wait, the verse already says she left, right? You read the NIV. Interestingly enough, the NIV says she is prepared to go home. Why? Because that is leading into the story. It is not meant to be chronological.

It is meant to be literal. Number two, do verses three and four follow chronologically? The answer is no, it does not. That's another clue that verses one, two, and three are this preamble, this introduction to what we're now going to be told.

So there are two things that we need to know. One is that Hebrew does this. And two, how do they do it? They do it by then giving you the backstory following this introduction bit.

And we know that because it's not chronological. Because you can't read verse three, and then verse four, and then verse five. So, there's a break between three and four, right? Picking it up in verse four.

For twelve years, they had served Kedron Bar, but in the thirteenth year, they rebelled. What does rebelling mean here? Again, this is a word. And you had better translate that word, rebelled, into another language.

There's a word for rebel. Yes. What did their rebellion look like? What did that constitute? Well, this requires an understanding of the ancient Eastern world.

And where you have kings who then take over other nations, and they don't live there. They don't take over those countries like Babylon did when they came in and destroyed Israel, and they took over, and they deported people, and all that stuff. In this case, even David did this, and Israel had it done to them by Babylon before Babylon came and wiped them out, but they have vassal kings who then pay tribute to the king that's over there.

And I believe that the kings would send someone to collect money from them every year, like taxes, okay? I'm here to collect the money that you owe us. We have that where, in the Old Testament, they refused to give a certain leader the tribute that year, okay? So, it's paying a tribute and refusing to pay that tribute. That's what it means by rebelling because it says 12 years they gave the tribute, the 13th year they refused, and that then prompted, verse 5, in the 14th year, the kings in their armies started moving, okay? So, it takes us to understand the context of the ancient East, the culture of the vassal kings, and the whole thing of paying tribute. To understand one word is enough for a king to go.

Now we're getting the picture. Again, we're at a thousand feet in our helicopter, and we're watching all this happen, right? And we do the scenario, and we're asking these key questions, questions that you may not have answered in the commentary. Can you get the answers? Yes, but we have to work.

Okay, so in the 14th year, they came and defeated Raphael, etc., etc., etc. So one of our questions was, where did this happen? Where did they come from? And where

were these particular people living? So, if you think of Israel, it is this long, slender country bordered on the East by the Jordan River. So, it's the Transjordan where these people came from, these four kings.

And they came, and they crossed over, and they started attacking other Canaanite tribes that were in the southern area of what is today Israel. And we know where these people lived. We can get commentaries that tell us where Rephaim lived, where the Zuzim lived, etc.

And we can find that on maps, and they can say this is approximately where they lived. So, we can get a picture in our mind: These kings came, and they attacked these smaller groups of people. We don't know how big these groups were.

They may not have been very big. But somehow, these four kings had enough soldiers not only to take over but also to take goods and people. So, they still had a large number of soldiers, enough big enough to do this.

So, we're getting the picture of this whole situation. So, by asking these questions, did that prompt us to go look for the answers? And believe it or not, if you don't know the answer, go look first. I am dead serious about that, okay? If you can't find the Bible verse, Google it.

Where's the Bible verse that you are the salt of the earth? If you Google that right now, you will find it in about a second or a half. So, the information is out there, but we need to get that information so that we can understand what's happening. That then feeds into how we're going to communicate this whole setting to the people that we're chastening for. So picking up in verse 8, the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, against verse 9, against four kings, against five.

And then we've already talked about verse 10. And the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and the king of Sodom and Gomorrah fled. And they, i.e. soldiers from Sodom and Gomorrah, some of them fell into these pits, and some of them escaped to the hills, okay? And we saw that versions like the NIV say some men fell.

The NLT and the ESV say some fell. So, it gives an idea that we're not talking about the kings, but the number of men belonging to those armies. And so that's made more clear just by the words some or some men.

Verse 11, then they, who's they? Then they took the goods. So, if you read verse 10, the last words mentioned are those who survived, steal goods. No.

Who's the they in verse 11? Again, information flow and tracking of participants. It's those two kings, sorry, the four kings that won the battle and their armies, took

goods from Sodom and Gomorrah and all of their food supply, and then they departed. And they also took a lot, even nothing.

Here's a question. How many of the king's armies of those five? How many of them fled? Probably, I don't know, and the text doesn't say, but probably all five. Because this group fought against this group, this group won, and the whole group ran away.

Okay. If all five ran away, why is Sodom mentioned, and why is Gomorrah mentioned, and why aren't the other three mentioned? Literary focus. It doesn't matter about those other three kings.

What matters is Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? And that's relentless. So, the literary focus focuses and zooms in on these guys over here, Sodom and Gomorrah. They ran away and, in the process of the men running away, left their towns vulnerable.

And so, the armies of those four came and took all the goods, came and took all the people, and including that, they took a lot. And all of that in 12 verses. That's a lot.

Okay. Let's be alarmed. Sorry.

Let me just say, does this help? Do we see better what's happening here now? Do we see that when they say Sodom and Gomorrah ran away, that probably more than Sodom and Gomorrah ran away, but was it necessary in order to communicate the story that they were trying to portray, which was the relationship between Abraham and Lot, and him living in Sodom, and Sodom getting sacked? That focus is literary focus, not reality focus. Again, you choose to talk about what you want to talk about, but you don't have to talk about everything. Okay.

We get there by asking these questions; once we realize that there is a problem, we realize what kind of problem it is, which then prompts us to look for the answers. And we look for the answers in a variety of different places. Okay.

Let's go to the New Testament, and we have some New Testament passages to look at. In this next portion, we're going to be talking about Mark 9. So let's go and read section by section. Mark 9:9 to 13.

This is following the episode of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, where Peter, James, and John are with him. And he's transfigured, and he's a fragment shining, and he talks to Moses and to Elijah. Then, we pick it up in verse 9. As they were coming down from the mountain, he gave orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man rose from the dead.

They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. Then they asked him why the scribes say Elijah must come first. And he

said to them, Elijah does come first and restore all things. And yet, how is it written of the Son of Man that he will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you, Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it was written of him.

All right. We want to draw attention. There are many questions we can ask, but let's focus on who is this Elijah. Who is Jesus talking about? And how do we know? So, if we read Mark 1, Mark 1 tells us a voice crying in the wilderness.

This is a prophecy from Isaiah. Make way, the way of the Lord. And that reference to Elijah being that voice in the wilderness, and it's talking about John the Baptist.

So, if we read another gospel account, we get a complete picture. But there's more. They had Elijah's, excuse me, they had Isaiah's prophecies for 700 years before Jesus.

And a lot of the Messianic prophecies in Isaiah are where we get most of the information about the Messiah. And in looking at Isaiah, everyone was expecting the Messiah to come. And the last prophet that spoke, Malachi, lived about 400 years before Jesus.

And there were 400 years of silence. 400 years, no prophets, no angels, no messages from God, nothing. And they were saying, when is this Messiah going to come? So, everybody was pumped and ready.

So, this is an allusion to the Old Testament. So, we need to understand the Old Testament in order to understand this passage. And we need to understand who Elijah was in order to understand this passage.

Again, this is the kind of information that we can't put into the text, but let's put it somewhere to explain what Jesus was saying. Okay. So, that helps us to break down who this is talking about because it's not immediately obvious.

Jesus speaks very figuratively, saying that Elijah and John the Baptist are the same person. Okay. All right.

Let's go back to another passage, the following passage, Mark 9:14 to 19. They came back to the disciples, the three disciples, and Jesus came back to the other nine disciples, who were not unknown. And they saw a large crowd around them and some scribes arguing with them.

Immediately after the crowd saw him, they were amazed and began running up to greet him. And he asked, what are you discussing with them? And one of the crowd answered him, teacher, I have brought you my son, possessed with a spirit that

makes him mute. And whenever it sees him, it slams into the ground, and he phones at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and stiffens out.

I told your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do it. And Jesus answered to them and said, oh, unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me. Okay.

So, we're going to track the participants through the first part of this passage. When they came back, again, if we read verses 9 through 13, we get the idea is Jesus with Peter, James, and John. The disciples mean the other disciples.

And so, one thing is we might need to say in our translation, another because the disciples came to the disciples. That could be a disconnect for some people. They saw, who saw? The four men, Jesus and the three.

Crowd around them, who them? Probably the nine disciples. Because, again, they're approaching the crowd. They're seeing this happen.

Again, we're seeing things from Jesus' eyes because Jesus is the center of attention. Eventually, when the entire crowd saw him, they were amazed and began running up to him to greet him. So, they're not a part of this argument just yet because they're watching it, and they're approaching it.

So, in verse 16, he asked them, what are you discussing with them? Here's a question. Again, whenever we have pronouns like you and them and this and that, we always circle them, underline them in red, put stars around them, and say, danger, danger, danger, there's trouble here. Who is you and who is them? I've heard sermons that said different things.

I've read commentaries that have different views. One sermon that I heard said that Jesus was talking to his disciples by asking, what are you discussing with them? Why are you arguing with these people? You shouldn't be arguing with these people. What are you doing? I suppose that's possible.

But having lived in Africa for almost 30 years, in a culture where honor is really, really important, even from a person of high status to a person of lower status, you would never call someone out. I did that once in a situation in our village. My wife had done something, and I said, why did you do that? Well, it was in front of some other ladies.

And my wife told me later, you shouldn't have called me out in front of those ladies. So, I told a neighbor of mine, yeah, my wife said I shouldn't have called her out. And my friend said she was right.

You don't do that. Not open. Okay.

So, is it likely that he was blaming or criticizing his disciples? I think it's not likely because of my understanding of how Eastern cultures operate. So, what are you discussing with them? Who answers the question? Someone from the crowd. So that leans us towards maybe it's someone in the crowd representing all the crowds.

They were the ones who discussed and argued with the disciples. Okay. So we know for sure.

Does it matter? We know that there was an argument. We know that there were two sides. And we know that there was some debate going on.

Okay. So, then we get the teacher bringing up his son to Jesus. And then Jesus responds, oh, you are an unbelieving generation.

So, it doesn't always require us to change something in the text, but at least we try to understand it as best we can. Okay. Continue.

Let's figure it out. Verse 19. And he answered and said to them, well, unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me.

And they brought the boy to him. When he saw him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. He asked his father how long this had been happening to him. And he said, from childhood.

It is often thrown both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us. And Jesus said to him, if you can, all things are possible to him who believes.

And immediately, the boy's father cried out and said, I do believe. Help white unbelief. Okay.

So, they brought the boy to him in verse 14. This unbelieving generation that Jesus mentioned in verse 19 is probably the whole crowd. We don't know.

It's not specified, but we can live with that. When he saw him again, pronouns, bells rang, lights flashed, and he underlined it in red, but he started here, who saw who? In Greek, there are no capitals.

It's he saw him. Who saw who? Again, if we look at it, the protagonist, the one who's causing the trouble, is the evil spirit that's in the boy.

And the case could be made that he is referring to the spirit. Or the spirit saw Jesus. And that is the direction that most of the commentaries and Bible versions go.

Immediately, that spirit, again, spirit is pneuma, which I believe, if I'm not mistaken, is a feminine noun. Is that right, Ted? Neuter. Okay.

Could be neutered. So neuter and he could go together. Okay.

Right. So, the spirit threw him into a convulsion. By context, we know he didn't throw Jesus into a convulsion or someone else.

He threw the boy into a convulsion, just like we had heard. Okay. But that when he saw him, we might need to say when the spirit saw him.

And the spirit is inside the boy. Okay. And then he throws him away into a convulsion.

He asks his father, again, if he is Jesus, being the center of attention, and we don't need to say, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. We know that he is the center. He is the main person in the text.

So, Jesus asks the father how long it has been happening. And he says, childhood, et cetera. Then he says if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us. And Jesus said to him, if you can, all things are possible to him who believes.

Now, this particular version puts a question mark. Other versions put a period. If you can, period.

The NLT says, what do you mean if you can? Is Jesus rebuking the guy? Read verse 19. You unbelieving generation, the lack of faith, the doubting, the refusing to believe is a theme in this passage. So, we have to think, what is that theme? In the passage, again, we have to look at the whole context and the whole situation.

Does the guy feel rebuked? There's an element to that there, where he says, I do believe, but help my own belief. Again, the word believes links directly to verse 19. You unbelieving generation.

I want to believe. I'm really sorry I said that. Please have mercy on me.

If you can, if it is indeed a question, it is a rhetorical question, not asked for information, but for rhetorical effect, for impact. And then Jesus says, all things are possible to him who believes. So again, belief and faith are all from this.

So, we have to ask ourselves, how can we communicate that rhetorical question in this other language if it is indeed a rhetorical question? And we have evidence from certain versions that would give us that insight. But what we do is we then see the best way to communicate it as an environment. He doesn't really, really shout at the guy, but he does somehow come out, and the guy does apologize.

It's simply, what do you mean if I can't? And in a somewhat benign or neutral statement, why did the man apologize? He apologized because he was called that. All of that deals with literature, references, and rhetorical devices in Greek, which are actually a reflection of the Aramaic that Jesus spoke to these other people. So, all of that makes interpretation a complex task.

But we do our best to get down to the core by starting to ask the questions and realizing that there's an issue, doing our research, and then coming up with a good interpretation, which then opens up the possibility of translation that we may not have had before.

This is Dr. George Payton and his teaching on Bible translation. This is session 17, Review of Translation Steps.