Payton, Bible Translation, Session 11,
Usages of Toledoth in Genesis and Translation
Resources from Notebooklm

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Payton, Bible Translation, Session 11, Usages of Toledoth in Genesis and Translation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. George Payton's lecture discusses the challenges of translating the Hebrew word *Toledot* in Genesis. He argues that existing translations lack consistency, offering various interpretations like "generations," "history," or "account." Payton proposes a more nuanced approach, examining both the macro and micro-level textual structures to determine *Toledot's* meaning and placement. He concludes that *Toledot* consistently marks the beginning of new sections, primarily signifying "progeny," and that consistent translation choices improve comprehension. His findings offer valuable insights for Bible translators working with the Hebrew text.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Payton, Session 11, Usages of Toledoth in Genesis and Translation – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Introductory Series → Bible Translation).

Payton_BT_Session1
1.mp3

3. Bible Translation: Session 11, Usages of Toledoth in Genesis and Translation

Toledot in Genesis: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the literal translation of "Toledot" and why is it challenging to translate?

2. What are some of the ways that the word "Toledot" is translated in English Bible versions?

3. How does Payton suggest approaching the study of "Toledot" differently than traditional scholarship?

4. What is an "inclusio" and how does it relate to the use of the word "eleh" with "Toledot"?

5. According to Payton, where does the phrase containing "Toledot" appear in relation to the text?

6. What are the three primary meanings of Toledot, according to Payton?

7. How does Toledot function as a literary device within the structure of Genesis?

8. How does the word "Holid" link various sections of Genesis, according to Payton?

9. What is the "main story" that Toledot helps to convey in the book of Genesis?

10. What is the primary translational implication Payton suggests regarding Toledot?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The literal translation of "Toledot" is "generations." It is challenging to translate because there is a wide range of opinions among scholars about its meaning and function, and because there is no consensus in how it is translated across various Bible versions.

2. English Bible versions translate "Toledot" as "generations," "records," "account," "story," "origins," or "genealogies." This variety highlights the lack of consensus on its meaning.

3. Payton suggests focusing on the micro-level details of the text, such as the grammatical structure and context of the phrase "eleh Toledot," in addition to the

macro-level structure that other scholars tend to focus on. He uses a crime scene investigation analogy to show how important small details are to finding a true solution.

4. An "inclusio" is a literary device where a phrase or idea appears at the beginning and end of a section, like "bookends" around the material, marking the beginning and end of a unit. In Genesis, "eleh" (these) followed by a list of names is used in this way.

5. According to Payton, the phrase containing "Toledot" always appears at the beginning of a section, introducing either a genealogy or a narrative. It is never used to conclude or summarize a section of text.

6. The three primary meanings of Toledot, according to Payton, are progeny (descendants in general), numbered progeny (a census), and male offspring (when preceding a narrative). He also finds that in some cases it refers figuratively to something created by or from something else.

7. Toledot functions as a literary device to connect narrative and genealogical sections, linking not only the sections, but also the time, location, and people involved. It emphasizes the continuity of the main line of characters in Genesis.

8. The verb "Holid," which means "to father," is linked to "Toledot." It connects all of these sections together by highlighting the idea of fathering and lineage throughout the book of Genesis.

9. The main story that Toledot helps to convey in the book of Genesis is how God establishes a special relationship with a specific lineage of people, a theme that is connected to both the promises of God and the concept of worship.

10. The primary translational implication Payton suggests is to use the same expression (like "progeny") for "Toledot" throughout Genesis, making the structure and the function of the term more evident for the reader. This reduces confusion for the reader and conveys the literary force of the term.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer the following questions using information from the text. Provide clear thesis statements and support with textual evidence.

1. Discuss the implications of the various ways that "Toledot" is translated in English Bible versions. What does this demonstrate about the nature of translation and interpretation of ancient texts?

2. Compare and contrast the macro-level and micro-level approaches to understanding "Toledot," as presented by Dr. Payton. How does he justify his focus on the micro-level details of the text?

3. Analyze the three main meanings of "Toledot" as proposed by Payton, providing textual evidence from Genesis to support each interpretation. How do these different meanings contribute to the overall narrative of the book?

4. Explain how "Toledot" functions as a literary device to connect and unify various sections of Genesis, according to Payton. How does this linking contribute to the overall themes and message of the book?

5. Evaluate the translational implications of Payton's findings on "Toledot." In what ways would using a single consistent term impact a reader's understanding of the book of Genesis, and is there any drawback to it?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Toledot:** A Hebrew word, literally meaning "generations," that is used in Genesis as a phrase ("these are the Toledot of...") that introduces sections of text and is translated in various ways in English versions of the Bible.

- **Inclusio:** A literary device where a phrase, word, or idea is repeated at the beginning and end of a literary unit, like a set of bookends.

- **Verbless Clause:** A clause that does not contain a verb, such as the phrase "these are the Toledot of Noah," which is common with the use of Toledot.

- **Micro-Level Analysis:** A method of studying the details of a text, such as grammar, word usage, and sentence structure, to understand the meaning of the text.

- **Macro-Level Analysis:** A method of studying the overall structure and context of a text, looking at sections and large literary patterns.

- **Progeny:** Offspring or descendants of a person, animal, or plant.

- **Numbered Progeny:** A specific usage of Toledot that focuses on the number of descendants, often in a census, rather than their names.

- **Linear Genealogy:** A genealogy where the descendants of a figure are listed in an unbroken line from one generation to the next and only one member of each generation is mentioned.

- **Segmented Genealogy:** A genealogy where descendants are listed and often include more than one person of each generation as well as additional information.

- **Metaphor:** A figure of speech where a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.

- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with that thing or concept.

- **Holid:** A Hebrew verb that means "to father," which is linguistically related to "Toledot," connecting the fathering of lineages to the concept of Toledot.

- **Shema:** A Hebrew term that means "to listen," relating to a posture of learning that Walton suggests is the way we should interact with the Torah.

- **Asah:** A Hebrew term that means "to do," relating to a posture of obedience that Walton suggests is the way we should interact with the Torah.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Payton BT_EN_Session11.pdf," which focuses on the Hebrew word *Toledot* in the book of Genesis:

Briefing Document: Understanding "Toledot" in Genesis

Source: Excerpts from "Payton BT_EN_Session11.pdf" by Dr. George Payton

Date: 2024

Overview: This document summarizes Dr. George Payton's analysis of the Hebrew word *Toledot* (translated as "generations," "records," "story," etc.) in Genesis, its function, meaning, and implications for translation. Dr. Payton argues for a consistent translation based on a close reading of the text and its micro-level grammatical features, rather than solely relying on macro-structural analysis.

Key Themes & Ideas:

1. **The Problem of Translating "Toledot":**

- **Lack of Consensus:** There is a wide range of opinions among scholars and Bible translations regarding the meaning of *Toledot* and its placement within the text (beginning or end of sections). As Payton states, "If you look at the literature on the meaning of Toledot, there's a wide range of opinions on what it means. There's a wide range of opinions."

- **Varied Translations:** Different Bible versions use diverse words for *Toledot* (e.g., "generations," "records," "account," "story"), obscuring its consistent function. For example, in Genesis 6:9, different translations render *Toledot* as "generations" (ESV), "records of the generations" (NASB), "account" (NIV), and "story" (Good News Translation).

- **Macro vs. Micro Analysis:** Traditional interpretations focus on macro-level structural issues (narrative vs. genealogy) to determine the meaning and location of *Toledot*. Dr. Payton argues that this is insufficient, and a micro-level approach should also be considered.

1. **Dr. Payton's Approach to Understanding "Toledot":**

- **Court Case Analogy:** Dr. Payton uses a court case analogy (motive, means, opportunity, and detailed evidence) to illustrate the importance of both macro-level context *and* micro-level textual details in the analysis of *Toledot*.

- **Verbless Clause Analysis:** *Toledot* always appears in a verbless clause, beginning with the word *eleh* ("these"). Payton focuses on how *eleh* is used in other verbless clauses in Genesis as a key to its meaning with *Toledot*. He notes that these clauses typically appear at the beginning *and* end of a list of names.

- **"Inclusio" Structure:** *Eleh* is used at the beginning and end of a set of names, functioning as an *inclusio*, like bookends, marking the beginning and end of a unit.

- **Placement of *Toledot*:** Payton demonstrates that *Toledot* consistently appears at the *beginning* of both narrative and genealogical sections, never at the end as a summary. The Masoretic text with the 'pay' marker also supports this analysis of its beginning placement. He explicitly states: "Therefore, it looks like it's always at the beginning. There's no evidence for it coming at the end."

- **Meaning based on grammatical agreement:** Payton shows that the plural *eleh* and plural *Toledot* are equal in kind, number, and gender. This equality points to a plural entity in context.

1. **The Meaning(s) of "Toledot":**

- **Not Multiple Meanings in One Verse:** Payton stresses that *Toledot* cannot have multiple meanings within the same verse. Context determines the triggered sense. He states: "when it's this is the Toledot of Noah, it can't mean a count and descendants...It can't mean two things at once."

- **Primary Meaning: Progeny:** After analyzing all 39 instances, Payton concludes that the primary meaning of *Toledot* is "progeny," referring to the descendants of a person.

- **Numbered Progeny:** In some contexts, like the census in Numbers, *Toledot* refers to "numbered progeny" where the emphasis is on the number of people from a tribe, not individual names.

- **Male Offspring:** When *Toledot* precedes a narrative, it typically means the immediate *male* offspring of a person.

- **Metaphorical/Metonymic Usage:** In Genesis 2:4 "the toledot of the heavens and the earth" Dr. Payton proposes a metaphorical or metonymic usage meaning "created from out of" referencing where Adam and Eve were taken from in the creation.

- **Toledot is not about the relationship of having produced offspring:** Payton specifically wants to avoid the idea that God fathered humans like other gods from the ancient near east. He argues for *Toledot* pointing to place, the heavens and the earth, as where they were created from, instead.

1. **"Toledot" as a Literary Device:**

- **Connecting Narratives and Genealogies:** *Toledot* serves as a connective device, linking narrative and genealogical sections throughout Genesis. It connects the main character's genealogy to the story about them.

- **Tail-Head Linkage:** The last person mentioned in a previous section is highlighted in the subsequent *Toledot* phrase, creating a "tail-head linkage" (e.g., Seth in Chapter 4 links to the genealogy in Chapter 5).

- **Links Time, Location, and People:** *Toledot* links not just sections but also elements like time, location, and people.

- **Cohesive Cord:** *Toledot*, in conjunction with the concepts of "seed" (Zerah) and the divine promises, forms a cohesive cord carrying the story of Genesis forward.

- **Emphasizes the Divine-Human Relationship:** The *Toledot* sections emphasize a special relationship between God and a particular lineage of people (Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). This is seen through the theme of worship.

- **Main Line vs. Others:** *Toledot* distinguishes between the main chosen lineage (linear genealogy) and other descendants (segmented genealogies).

1. **Implications for Translation:**

- **Consistent Translation:** Dr. Payton advocates for a consistent translation of *Toledot* throughout Genesis, using the same phrase to highlight its function as a major section marker. "Using that same phrase all the way through is really helpful for the reader to know this is a major section at the beginning."

- **Focus on "Progeny":** A recommended translation approach is to use "these are the progeny of [named ancestor]" to show the people, not simply the process of making them.

- **Contextual Understanding:** Translators need to understand the specific sense of *Toledot* in context, whether it means the entire progeny, numbered progeny, or male offspring. The word "progeny" can evoke the right meaning based on the context.

- **Avoiding Confusion:** Using a consistent translation can help readers understand the structure and thematic development of Genesis, avoiding confusion caused by varying translations.

Conclusion:

Dr. Payton's analysis of *Toledot* offers a new approach to understanding this critical word in Genesis. By examining the micro-level grammar and consistently using the same translation of "progeny" for *Toledot* while being sensitive to the specific context, translators can provide a clearer, more accurate, and cohesive reading of the book of Genesis. The consistent use of this phrase will bring the structure of the text to light for the reader, according to his presentation. This approach highlights the importance of a close reading of the Hebrew text and its detailed structures.

5. FAQs on Payton, Bible Translation, Session 11, Usages of Toledoth in Genesis and Translation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Hebrew Word "Toledot" in Genesis

1. **What is "Toledot" and why is it significant in the book of Genesis?**

2. "Toledot," a Hebrew word, translates roughly to "generations," "history," "story," "origins," or "genealogies." It is significant because it appears as a phrase (often translated as "these are the generations of...") at the beginning of various sections in Genesis and serves as a key structural marker. It's not just a heading but part of the sentence, and its meaning and placement have been debated by scholars. It functions as a linking device throughout the book.

3. **What are some of the challenges in translating "Toledot" from Hebrew into other languages?**

4. The primary challenge lies in the wide range of opinions about what "Toledot" means and how it functions within the text. There's no scholarly consensus on its precise meaning: Does it mark the beginning or end of a section, or both? Does it mean history, story, genealogy, or something else? Different Bible versions use different translations for "Toledot" leading to confusion. The word also appears in verbless clauses which further makes it difficult to translate.

5. **How has "Toledot" traditionally been interpreted and what does Dr. Payton suggest?**

6. Traditionally, scholars have looked at the macro-level structure of the text to determine the meaning of "Toledot." If it precedes a narrative, it was seen as history or account. If it precedes a genealogy, it was seen as descendants. Dr. Payton proposes a micro-level approach by looking at the grammatical structure of the sentence in which it appears ("these are the Toledot of...") and the immediate context. He argues that "Toledot" has a consistent function within Genesis, not varying based on the following material. He suggests it consistently appears at the beginning of sections.

7. **What is the significance of the phrase "These are the Toledot of..." in the Hebrew?**

8. The phrase begins with the Hebrew word "eleh" which means "these" and creates a verbless clause. Dr. Payton points out that in other instances of the phrase "these are..." (eleh followed by a noun) outside the Toledot formula, it's used to introduce and conclude lists of names, marking an inclusio or bookend. Thus, "these" is equal to "Toledot" in grammatical gender, number, and kind, indicating the word is pointing to a plural entity in the context.

9. **What are the different meanings that Dr. Payton proposes for "Toledot," and how does he arrive at these meanings?**

10. Dr. Payton argues that "Toledot" has three primary meanings derived from a micro-level analysis:

- **Progeny:** Primarily in genealogical contexts, "Toledot" refers to the descendants or "progeny" of a particular ancestor.

- **Numbered Progeny:** In some contexts, "Toledot" is used to refer to the total number of people within a group, with less of a focus on individual names, such as the numbered warriors in Numbers and the numbered settlers in Chronicles.

- **Male Offspring:** Before narratives, "Toledot" points specifically to the immediate male offspring, often sons, of an ancestor.

1. **How does Dr. Payton interpret "These are the Toledot of the heavens and the earth" in Genesis 2:4?**

2. Dr. Payton argues that in Genesis 2:4, "Toledot" does not refer to the heavens and earth as progenitors but as a place from which humans came. He interprets "of" to mean "from" or "out of," akin to how one might say "gold of Ophir" to mean "gold from Ophir." He understands it to mean that Adam and Eve were *created* from the heavens and the earth, in the sense that the earth was the raw material for their creation.

3. **How does "Toledot" function as a literary device within Genesis?**

4. "Toledot" acts as a unifying literary device that connects narrative and genealogical sections throughout Genesis. It creates a "tail-head" linkage where the last mentioned figure in the previous section is the one who is highlighted in the "Toledot" formula. This links the people, places and time between these sections. It also connects the theme of divine-human relationship and the covenant God made with certain lineages. It also emphasizes the theme of worship.

5. **What are the implications of Dr. Payton's analysis for Bible translation?**

6. Dr. Payton emphasizes the need for translators to recognize that "Toledot" refers to people. He suggests that using the same consistent phrase throughout Genesis ("These are the progeny of...") helps the reader identify the marker at the beginning of a major section of the text. This will highlight the continuity of the narrative and the links between sections, thus supporting the authorial intent of the text. This approach is different from many modern translations which do not use a consistent phrase.