

Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Septuagint - LXX

The Septuagint - LXX - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/12/16 9:43

Most Jews in the 1st century lived outside the land of Israel and were not familiar with biblical Hebrew. In the 3rd century BC a Greek translation of the Old Testament appeared. It is known as the Septuagint (or LXX from the Roman symbol for 70). In many ways this became the most powerful tool for evangelism among people who used Greek as their common trading language. It became the 'Authorised Version' (KJV) of the early church.

Many words like 'ekklesia', 'baptizo' already had a history in the LXX. When these words are used in the NT it is good to remember that they were already known to the readers of the gospels and epistles.

This article gives a helpful, non-technical introduction to this fascinating translation.

Re: The Septuagint - LXX - posted by Nasher (), on: 2003/12/18 4:59

Hi Ron, I know that in Isaiah 21:4 the word 'baptizei' is used, which (in a sermon) you translate as baptised (i.e. past tense), however when I look in the NT and find this same word in John 3:26 is it translated as baptizeth(AV) / baptizing(YLT) (i.e. present tense); In John 4:1 the same word is used again but the AV uses baptized (past tense), all other translations use the present tense.

I don't know much about Greek so I wondered how you came to the conclusion that the word is used in the past tense?

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/12/18 6:10

Hi Nasher

This is going to be a bit technical. Baptizei from the LXX of Is 21:4 is present tense. However it is the LXX Greek translation for a Hebrew word 'ba'ath' which in the Masoretic text of Is 21:4 is in the perfect mood, signifying a completed action. I was probably just instinctively carrying the sense of the Hebrew (which has been captured in the AV) into my translation of the word 'baptizei'.

Regarding John 4:1 a strict translation would be 'baptising' but John and Mark (maybe others) put a lot of past action into the present tense. It has a dramatising effect and produces the feel of someone who is actually watching the event. Whereas the event described is strictly speaking 'historical'. This is just an idiomatic way of conveying immediacy and movement. Tyndale (and the AV) have not translated the tense of the verb literally but have captured the historic meaning.

I don't know that I know much more Greek than you, although I know enough to know how little I know, and to be extremely cautious in basing things on my knowledge of Greek. If I appear an expert, it may be because in the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king :-D