

CLARIFYING
BAFFLING
BIBLICAL PASSAGES

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

SUMMARY
OF CHAPTERS 1–35

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XXXVI

SUMMARY

The following list of eighty-four phrases from fifty-five verses summarizes the translations I proposed in the chapters above. Scriptural references in italics indicate that Arabic cognates were cited to support the italicized translations. The nine words/phrases requiring an emendation of the consonantal Hebrew text are marked with an asterisk at the end of the translated line and are summarized in a subsequent paragraph.

- Gen 3:14* עֵפֶר תֹאכַל “*small creatures shall you eat*”
- Gen 3:16* בָּךְ יִמְשַׁל “(your husband) *will be like you*”
- Gen 16:12* הוּא יִהְיֶה פֶּרֶא אָדָם “he shall be a *peace-maker, a reconciler*”
- Gen 16:12* עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-אָחָיו יִשְׁכֵן “in the *favor* of all his brothers he will dwell (*tranquilly*)”
- Gen 25:18* עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-אָחָיו נִפְּלָ “he *embraced* all his brethren”
- Exo 4:24* וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ יְהוָה וַיִּבְקֶשׂ הַמִּיתוֹ “Yahweh met him and sought *to bond the relationship*”
- Exo 4:26* וַיִּרְף . . . חֲתָן הַמַּיִם לְמוֹלַת “*they became bonded . . . ‘You are a blood relative by circumcision’*”
- Lev 16: 10* לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ לְעֹזָאוֹל הַמִּדְבָּרָה “to send it to a *harsh rugged place, into the wilderness*”
- Lev 16:21* שְׁלַח בְּיַד-אִישׁ עֲתִי הַמִּדְבָּרָה “to send (it) by the hand of an *extremely corrupt* man into the wilderness”

- Num 12:3* מוֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ מוֹשָׁה “Moses was brought to despair”
- Num 33:32* וַיַּחֲנוּ בַחַר הַגִּדְגָד “they encamped at the inlet of the (Wadi) Gidgad”
- Deu 15:11* לֹא־יַחְדַּל אֶבְיוֹן “the poor must not be treated unjustly”
- Deu 15:11* לֹא־יַחְדַּל אֶבְיוֹן “the poor must not be denied assistance”
- Jos 2:1* וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית־אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה “they entered the house of a woman innkeeper”
- Jos 10:12* שֶׁמֶשׁ בִּגְבַעוֹן רוֹם “Sun, be dark in Gibeon!”
- Jos 10:13* וַיִּדָּם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּרְחַ עֹמֵד “the sun became darkened and the moon stayed concealed”
- Jos 10:13* וַיַּעֲמֵד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בַּחֲצֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם “the sun concealed itself while in the middle of the sky”
- Jos 10:13* לֹא אָזַן לָבוֹא כִּיּוֹם תָּמִים “it actually hastened to set as though it were a whole day”
- II Kings 22:14* שֹׁמֵרֵת בְּגֵדִים “the (woman who was) guarding the truths / traditions”
- II Chron 34:22* שֹׁמֵרֵת בְּגֵדִים “the (woman who was) guarding the truths / traditions”
- II Chron 34:22* הִיא יוֹשֶׁבֶת בִּירוּשָׁלַם בַּמִּשְׁנָה “she was dwelling in Jerusalem in her old age”
- II Chron 28:6* מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף “one hundred twenty contingents”
- II Chron 28:15* הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־נִקְבוּ בַשְּׂמוֹת “the men who were designated by badges to be in charge”
- Psa 2:11* גִּילוּ בְרַעְדָּה “adore [God] with unrestraint”

- Psa 2:12 נשקו בר “*worship with fidelity*”
- Psa 48:2 הַר־צִיּוֹן יִרְכָּתִי צְפוֹן “*Mount Zion, the quintessence of purity*”
- Pro 30:1 דְּבָרֵי אֲנֹר “*the words of one-rewarded-for-righteousness*”
- Pro 30:1 בֶּן־יִקָּה “*a pious person*”
- Pro 30:1 הַמִּשָּׂא נֹאֵם “*the one authoring the saying*”
- Pro 30:1 הַגִּבֹּר “*the one-restored-to-sound-estate*”
- Pro 30:1 לֵאלֹהֵינוּ “*surely there is a God*”
- Pro 30:1 אֶכְלָה “*I will be kept safe*”
- Pro 30:2 כִּי בָעַר אֲנֹכִי מֵאִישׁ “*for I was consumed from despair*”
- Pro 30:4 מַה שָּׂמוֹ שָׂמוֹ “*How exalted his name!*”*
- Pro 30:4 מַה שֵׁם בִּינוֹ “*How sublime his intelligence!*”*
- Pro 30:5 כִּי תִדְעַה כָּל־אִמְרַת אֱלֹהִים צְרוּפָה “*Certainly you know every saying of God has stood the test!*”
- Ecc 7:26 מֵרַם מִמָּוֶת אֶת־אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר “*. . . more bitter than death is a self-conceited woman*”*
- Ecc 7:26 הִיא מְצוּדִים וַחֲרָמִים לְבָהּ “*she is a (sure) snare and her heart is a (really tight) net*”
- Ecc 7:28 מִצֵּאתֵי אָדָם אֶחָד מֵאַלְפֵי מֵאַלְפֵי “*I found a single friendly man out of a thousand*”*
- SSol 1:3 לְרִיחַ שְׂמֹנֶיךָ טוֹבִים “*truly, the scent of your perfume is delightful!*”
- SSol 1:3 שֶׁמֶן תּוֹרַק שְׂמֹךְ “*precious, your scent was made to induce pleasure*”

- SSol 1:4* מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲהַבְוּךָ “they loved you more than great luxuries”
- Isa 65:25* נָחַשׁ עֹפֵר לְחֻמוֹ “the serpent (will have) *vegetation* for his food”
- Jer 5:8* סוּסִים מוֹזְנִים מִשְׁכִּים הָיוּ “they were stallions on the verge of *discharging semen*”
- Jer 31:21* שׁוּבֵי בְתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁבִי אֶל-עָרֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים “Return, O *Virtuous* Israel, return to your *negligent* city.
- Jer 31:22* עַד-מָתַי תִּתְחַמְקִין הַבַּת הַשׁוֹבְבָה “How long will you remain *stupid*, O faithless daughter?”
- Jer 31:22* נִקְבָּה תִסְבֵּב גָּבֵר “the female *enamors* the male”
- Jer 51:53* וְכִי תִבְצֹר מְרוֹם עוֹזָה “though she make inaccessible the top of her *tel*”
- Ezek 3:14* אָלַךְ מֵר בַּחֲמַת רוּחַ “I went off *flying in circles of wind*”*
- Ezek 13:18* הוּי לְמִתְפָּרוֹת כִּסְתוֹת עַל כָּל-אַצְיָלֵי יָדַי “Woe to the ones tying *bandages* on every *maimed limb*”
- Ezek 13:18* עֲשׂוֹת הַמִּסְפַּחֹת עַל-כָּל-רֹאשׁ צוֹרֵד “placing *compresses* upon every *oozing* head”
- Ezek 13:18* תִּצְוֹדְדֵנָה לְעַמִּי “*they shun my very own* people”
- Ezek 13:18* נַפְשׁוֹת לְכֹנֵה תְחַיֶּינָה “those of their own [*still*] *breathing*, they restore to life”
- Ezek 13:19* לְחַיֹּת נַפְשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תְחַיֶּינָה “to keep alive *those breathing* who ought not to be alive”

- Ezek 13:19 לְהַמִּית נְפֹשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תָמוּתָנָה “to let die those *breathing* who ought not to have died”
- Ezek 13:19 תַּחְלִלְנָה אֶתִּי אֶל-עַמִּי “they have undermined *my warning* to my people”
- Ezek 13:20 אֶת-הַנְּפֹשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר אֶתְנָה מִצַּדְרוֹת “The *ones breathing* whom you shunned”
- Ezek 13:20 הִנְנִי אֶל-כַּסְתוֹתֶיכֶם “behold, I am against your *bandages*”
- Ezek 13:20 שֵׁם לְפָרְחוֹת “(I) *designate*(to be) the *ones-set-free*”
- Ezek 13:20 וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי לְפָרְחָתִי “I will let go to (become) the *ones-set-free*”
- Ezek 28:12 אֶתָּה הוֹתֶם תְּבוּנָה “you were the signet of *erudition*”*
- Ezek 28:12 כְּלִיל יָפִי “*crowned with beauty*”
- Ezek 28:13 זֶהָב כַּתָּח “(your canopy was of) *gold leaf*”*
- Ezek 28:13 וְנִקְבִּיךְ בָּם מֵלֵא פוֹךְ “your *settings* for them were filled with *antimony*”*
- Ezek 28:13 בְּיוֹם הַבְּרָאךְ “for the day you were *perfected*”
- Ezek 28:14 כָּרַב הַסּוֹכֵן מְשִׁיחִים נְתַתִּיךָ “I set you as the *chief statesman of the anointed*”*
- Ezek 28:13 בְּעֵדֶן גֶּן-אֱלֹהִים הָיִיתִי “I was in Eden, the garden of God”
- Ezek 28:14 הָיִיתִי בְּהַר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים “I was on the holy mountain of God”
- Joel 2:31 הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לְחֹשֶׁךְ וְהַיָּרֵחַ לְדָם “the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to *blackness*”

- Amos 7:14* בוקר אֲנִי וּבֹלֵס שְׁקִמִּים “I am an *inquirer* and an *investigator* of *whatever happens*”
- Zech 5:6* זאת האִיפָה הַיּוֹצֵאת “this is the *mobile shrine*”
- Zech 5:7* הִנֵּה כִפֵּר עֲפֶרֶת נִשְׂאת “lo, the *circular cover / circular roof* was lifted”
- Zech 5:7* זאת אִשָּׁה אַחַת יּוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּתוֹךְ הָאִיפָה “this is ‘the *first lady*’ (= goddess) sitting in the center of the *shrine*”
- Matt 2:9* ὁ ἀστὴρ . . . ἑστάθη = עמד . . . הככב = “the *star set*”
- Matt 7:6* μὴ δώτε τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς κυσὶν = אַל תתנו הטהור לַכִּלְבִּים = “Do not give the *holy (word)* to the *dog keepers*”
- Matt 7:6* μηδὲ βάλητε τοὺς μαργαρίτας ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν χοίρων = וְאַל תורו תורתכם לפני החזירים = “and do not *teach your torah* in the *presence of swine-herders*”
- Matt 7:6* μήποτε καταπατήσουσιν αὐτοὺς ἐν τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτῶν = פֶּן מטריפים אותה ברגליהם = “lest, *blaspheming it* with their *slander*”
- Matt 7:6* καὶ στραφέντες ῥήξουσιν ὑμᾶς = וְחוזרים יקרעו אתכם = “and *disavowing (it)*, they *malign you*”
- Matt 7:11* εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ = אִם אתם רעים = “if you being *kinfolk*”
- Matt 8:22* ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκροὺς = עזוב המתים לקבור מתיהם = “let the *next of kin* bury their *dead*”
- Matt 10:34* μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν = אַל תחשבו שבאתי שלם בארץ אלא

חלף = “do not think that I have come to bring
the end/retribution on the earth, but a *change*”

Luke 14:26 καὶ οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ = אִם יבא
אֵלַי אִישׁ וְלֹא יִשְׁנָא אֶת אָבִיו = (1) “if a man
comes to me and *does not treat* his father with
gentleness” or (2) “. . . and does not *rightfully*
support his father” or (3) “. . .and does not for-
sake his father” or (4) “. . . and he *truly hates* his
father”

John 21:15 ἀγαπᾷς με πλεον τούτων = הֲתֵאָהֱבֵנִי יוֹתֵר
מֵאֵלֶּה = “Do you love me more than *kith-and-*
kin?”

PsSol 2:26 ἐκκεκεντημένον ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρέων Αἰγύπτου
= נַחַר עַל חַרֵּי מִצְרַיִם = “he was stabbed along
the *inlets* of Egypt”

The high frequency of correspondence between Hebrew and Arabic words is illustrated in the *Addendum* to Chapter XIX (178–180) which lists twenty-nine Arabic cognates of the thirty-three lexemes in Jer 32:21–22. While these cognates are widely recognized in standard Hebrew lexicons, relevant nuances of five of them have gone unnoticed in recent interpretations of these verses. Moreover, Arabic cognates were helpful in clarifying the ambiguities of Septuagintal readings in Gen 16:12, Jer 31:22, Ezek 3:14, and Psa 68:31.

Non-Judean dialects of Hebrew, found in Exo 4:24–26 and in Prov 30:1–5, were quite baffling to interpreters who assumed these texts were in standard Judean Hebrew. Clarity came to these verses once dialectal elements were recognized and possible Arabic cognates were examined.

Although Arabic cognates provided most of the clues for the interpretation of the biblical and extra-biblical texts

examined in the chapters above, other Semitic languages including Akkadian, Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic, and Ethiopic provided many clues, as well as non-Semitic languages including Greek, Coptic, Egyptian, and in one case even Sanskrit.

In addition to new translations which are based on lexical data that had been overlooked, a number of the above translations come from the recognition that highly ambiguous Hebrew homographs permit a wide variety of interpretations. Variant definitions of homographs may be lexically correct, but not all definitions would convey the intent of the author—unless there had been a deliberate use of layered meanings. The statement of Jesus in Luke 14:26 when reconstructed in Hebrew presents the interpreter with this type of ambiguity. As a result, even in summary, four different translations for the reconstructed Hebrew text of this verse need to be noted.

While three chapters (IV, XXX, XXXII) focused primarily on biblical or biblically related names, the meaning of thirty six names were reviewed, and the uncertainties about the etymology and meaning of many of the following names were clarified.

Aaron	Dalmanutha	Massa
Abraham	Dudael	Mattattah
Abram	Hasmonean	Matthew
Agur	Horhaggidad	Miriam
Alphaeus	Huldah	Moriah
Amatti	Ithiel	Oded
Azazel	Jakeh	<i>Šaba'im</i>
Ben Saṭda ³	Magadan	<i>Šaphon</i>
Ben Pandira	Magdalene	Tekoa
Ben Panṭira	Martha	Thracida
Beth-hadurey	Mary	Ucal
Cassius	Massa	Zion

The emendations proposed in the chapters above include reading the MT:

- (1) מזה שמו שמו as מזה שמו שמו (a haplography)
- (2) מזה שם בינו as מזה שם בנו (*scriptio plene*)
- (3) אשה אשרה as האשה אשר (shifting of a ה)
- (4) מאלף מאלף as מאלף (a haplography)
- (5) בחמת רוח as בחמת רוחי (removing a י')
- (6) תכנית as תבונה (a confusion of ב and כ, ו and י')
- (7) מלאכת תפיד as מלאכת פוד (a redivision)
- (8) ונקביד במ as ונקביד בכ (confusion of כ and ב)
- (9) כרב הסוכן as כרב הסוכך (confusion of כ and כ)

These are modest changes to the received text—in contrast to bold emendations, like the one proposed by Holladay (see 166, above) who changed the MT אלה to בעלה, as if a בע could have been confused with an א.

More serious textual problems were encountered in Eze 13: 17–23 and 28:2–19, requiring a rearrangement of many lines in order to reconstruct a logical sequence of statements about the triage given to the wounded when Jerusalem fell in 587 B.C.E. and of statements by the king of Tyre about his being divine and his having been in the Garden of Eden.

Even baffling statements in the Gospels—like a star standing over a manger, throwing pearls to swine, putting a lamp under a cushion, dead people burying dead people, and a commandment to hate kith-and-kin after saying that “loving your neighbor” is the second greatest commandment—were clarified simply by reconstructing a Hebrew *Vorlage* and dealing with the ambiguities created once the reconstructed oral statement was written in consonantal Hebrew/Aramaic, much like the spelling found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.