

after “completing” the picture, should be the same message that the Biblical author intended to convey.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me point out some obvious advantages of “picture translation” as an analytical tool and as a method of translating narrative material. First of all, events are usually put in the order in which they happen, thus making the translation much easier to understand. Secondly, translators become less dependent on the words of the source text, resulting in a much more natural translation. And thirdly, verse numberings no longer become a hindrance to meaningful restructuring of the text.

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THE MEANING OF *KOSMOS*, “WORLD”, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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The basic idea of the Greek work *kosmos* is “order” or “arrangement”; so the word may mean “adornment”, as in 1 Pet 3.3, “outward adorning” (RSV; GNB “make yourselves beautiful”). The related verb *kosmeō* means “to arrange”, “to furnish”, or “to adorn”: so in Mt. 23.29 “you . . . decorate the monuments”; 1 Pet 3.5 “women . . . used to make themselves beautiful” (See also Mt 12.44; 25.7; Lk 11.25; 21.5; 1 Tim 2.9; Tit 2.10; Rev 21.2,19.) The related adjective *kosmios* means “fitting” or “decent” (1 Tim 2.9; 3.2).

The noun *kosmos* occurs some 188 times in the New Testament, of which 104 are in the Gospel and the Letters of John; another 46 times the word appears in Paul’s Letters and the so-called Pastoral Letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus).

The idea of order is always present in the meaning “universe” or “world”, which is the sense the Greek noun most often carries. In biblical thought, of course, this order is the result of God’s activity. God created the universe as an orderly, harmonious system.

The universe

The word *kosmos* may refer to the universe or the whole of creation. In Acts 17.24 the statement is made, “God (is) the creator of the universe and everything in it”; and in Phil 2.15 Paul says that Christians are to “shine” in the midst of corrupt and sinful people as the stars shine in the universe. Here “in the sky” serves as a more natural translation in English, since it is the normal way of referring to stars.

There are passages which speak of the creation or foundation or beginning of the *kosmos*. In these it is difficult to decide whether the biblical writer was consciously thinking of all creation, the universe, or of this planet, the world. Naturally in biblical thought the two were created at the same time, so there is no problem, so far as the original writer and readers are concerned. In transla-

tion it would seem that whichever sounds more natural should be used. If, however, in the culture represented by a given language the world is thought to have been created separately from the universe as a whole, it would probably be better to say "universe", "all of creation", "everything that exists".

The phrase "from the foundation of the world" means "ever since the universe was created", "ever since the universe came into being (or, began)". It may be preferable to say "ever since God created the universe". The phrase is used in Mt 25.34; Lk 11.50; Heb 4.3; 9.26; Rev 13.8; 17.8. We should note that in Rev 13.8 "since the creation of the world" modifies "written in the Lamb's book of life" (see 17.8), not "(the Lamb) that was slain". And in Mt 13.35 the best Greek text does not have the word *kosmos*, but the meaning is the same, "since the universe was created", as in the fuller phrase in 25.34.

The phrase "before the foundation of the world" is found in Jn 17.24; Eph 1.4; 1 Pet 1.20. See also the similar "before the world existed" in Jn 17.5, "ever since the creation of the world" in Rom 1.20, and "from the beginning of the world" in Mt 24.21. (The parallel passage Mk 13.19 has "from the beginning of creation, which God created".) In all these passages a translation may say "before God created the universe" or "before the universe came into being".

There is considerable disagreement over the precise meaning of the phrase which GNB translates "the ruling spirits of the universe" in Gal 4.3 (see also 4.9); Col 2.8, 20. GNB takes the Greek plural noun *ta stoicheia* to refer to the evil angels and spirits which were thought to rule the planets and the stars; some other translations take them to mean elementary religious teaching.

The compound Greek noun *kosmokratōr* "world ruler" is used in the plural in Eph 6.12 to refer to the evil spiritual rulers of the universe (GNB "cosmic powers of this dark age").

In 1 Cor 3.22 Paul includes "the world" (together with "life and death, the present and the future") as one of the various things that belong to Christians. Paul's statement is all-inclusive, and we will do well to translate here "the universe", "all of creation", or "everything that God has made".

This world

Often *kosmos* refers to this world in which we live, the earth. It is not always possible (and, sometimes, not necessary) to decide whether the reference is solely to the world, this planet, or to the inhabitants of the planet, humanity as a whole. Naturally the *kosmos* is never thought of as uninhabited, so whether it is mentioned or not it is always taken for granted that the world is inhabited. In the passages listed under this heading the word is used in a neutral sense, without any suggestion of evil or sin as such.

In Rome 4.13, for example, Paul writes that God promised to Abraham and his descendants that "the world" would be his (or, theirs). There is no passage in the OT that says this exactly, but it is usually assumed that Paul was thinking of passages such as Gen 18.18, 22.17-18. The meaning of the NT passage is that Abraham and his descendants, as a result of God's action, would rule over all people. If possible, however, a translation should reflect rather closely the wording of the text, as GNB has tried to do: "God promised Abraham and his descendants that the world would belong to him . . ."

Some passages in which the word means "the world" or "the earth" are: Mt

4.8 (“the kingdoms of the world”), Mt 13.38 (“the field represents the world”), Mt 26.13 (“all the world”, and also the parallel Mk 14.9), and Mk 16.15 (“Go throughout the whole world”). 2 Pet 2.5 speaks of “the ancient world” that was destroyed by the Flood, a world filled with godless people; the same context appears in 2 Pet 3.6, which speaks of “the world that existed then” that was destroyed by the Flood.

Other passages in which the neutral meaning of “this world”, without any suggestion of evil, is intended are: Jn 1.10; 8.26; 9.5; 11.9; 12.25; 16.33; 17.15; 21.25; Rom 1.8; 1 Cor 5.10 (“you would have to leave the world entirely”); 2 Cor 1.12; Eph 2.12; Col 1.6; 1 Pet 5.9; 1 Jn 4.1,17; 2 Jn 7.

The phrase “to come to (or, into) the world” is often used of Jesus. It does not, of itself, mean an “entrance” into the world which is supernatural or miraculous. When a person is born he comes into the world, and in death he leaves it (1 Tim 6.7). Jn 16.21 speaks of the happiness of a mother when “a child is born into the world”, and Jn 6.14 refers to the promised prophet who was to come into the world.

God sends Jesus into the world (Jn 3.17; 10.36; 17.18; 1 Jn 4.9,14); and in the same way Jesus sends his disciples into the world (Jn 17.18). Jesus came to, or into, the world (Jn 1.9,10; 3.19; 9.39; 11.27; 12.46,47; 16.28; 18.37; 1 Tim 1.15; Heb 10.5). When his death is near, Jesus says he is no longer in the world, as his disciples are (Jn 17.11). At death Jesus departs from this world (Jn 13.1), or leaves the world (Jn 16.28), and goes to the Father. In all these cases *kosmos* means the earth, not simply as a planet but as the place of human existence and activity, without any overtones of human existence and activity, without any overtones of condemnation.

It is not easy to classify 1 Cor 4.9, “we apostles have become a spectacle for the world of angels and of people”. The lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich defines *kosmos* here as “the world as the sum total of all things above the level of animals.” It is possible that a translation here could say “a spectacle for angels and for people”. In Greek “for angels and for people” is a definition or explanation of what is meant by “the world”; so NEB translates: “a spectacle to the whole universe—angels as well as men.”

In Heb 9.1 the adjective *kosmikos* “worldly” is applied to the Jewish sanctuary, and means “man-made” or “belonging to this world”.

Humanity

In many passages *kosmos* designates not primarily the earth itself, but the people who live on earth. In these passages it might be well to say “people” or “humanity”, or something similar, if the word for “world” does not carry the additional meaning “human beings”. In Jn 1.10, for example, “He was in the world, and through him God made the world, yet the world did not know him”, the third use of “the world” is clearly “people”, not the physical earth itself, which is the meaning in the first two instances. Other passages in which *kosmos* has this meaning are: Mt 5.14; 18.7; Jn 1.29; 3.16,17; 4.42; 6.33,51; 8.12; 9.5; 12.47; 14.27; 16.8; Rom 3.6,19; 5.12,13; 11.12,15; 1 Cor 1.20,21,27,28; 4.13 (“the garbage of the world”); 6.2; 14.10 (“many languages in the world”, that is “many languages spoken by people”); 2 Cor 5.19; 1 Tim 3.16; Heb 11.7,38; Jas 2.5; 2 Pet 2.5; 1 Jn 2.2; 4.3,4,14.

In Jn 7.4 “make yourself known to the world” means “publicly” or “to everyone” (see also 18.20). In Jn 12.19 “the world is going after him” (that is, Jesus) is an exaggerated way of saying “everybody is following him”.

Rev 11.15 speaks of God’s and Christ’s rule over the world, which includes both the earth, as a place, and all people living in the world.

Worldly activities or values

Under this heading we may include those passages in which *kosmos* carries a negative shade of meaning, as being at least undesirable, if not completely corrupt and evil. So in Mt 16.26 (and parallels Mk 8.36, Lk 9.25) “to gain the world” is not seen as desirable or even morally neutral; to gain all the wealth in the world is potentially a harmful thing (see also 1 Cor 7.31). In 1 Cor 5.10 “this world” is human society separate from the fellowship of Christians, as it is in 7.33,34; Gal 6.14. In 1 Jn 2.15–16 love for the world is incompatible with love for God. In 1 Jn 3.17 the phrase “the goods of the world” means material possessions, wealth, riches. In 2 Cor 7.10 “sorrow of the world” is merely human sorrow, and it is harmful, as contrasted with godly sorrow, which is good.

It is difficult to decide the exact shade of meaning of the word in 1 Cor 7.31, “The form of this world is passing away” (RSV), and in the similar 1 Jn 2.17 “The world and its desire is passing away.” It may well be that in both passages the biblical writers use the word to mean the actual physical planet (or universe) in which we live; this “passing away”, however, is not a natural process of decay, but is the result of God’s judgment upon mankind.

In Col 2.20 “Why do you obey rules as though you lived in the world?” means “. . . as though you were guided by this world’s standards, or values.” The same suggestion of evil is present in 2 Pet 1.4 (GNB “the destructive lust that is in the world”) and in 2 Pet 2.20 (GNB “the corrupting forces of the world”).

The adjective *kosmikos* in Tit 2.12 has a bad meaning, too, “worldly passions”.

The world as evil

In a good many places in the NT *kosmos* refers to the world as a place which is hostile to God and to Christ, a source of moral corruption, a danger to the spiritual health and life of Christians. This meaning of the word is common in the Gospel of John and in 1 John, but it is found in other passages as well.

In 1 Cor 2.12 Paul speaks of “the spirit of the world” which Christians have not received; they have received God’s Spirit. In 1 Cor 3.19 “the wisdom of the world” is foolishness in God’s sight. In 1 Cor 11.32 the world is condemned by God. In Eph. 2.2 “the course of this world” (RSV: GNB “the world’s evil way”) is inherently evil. The Greek noun translated “course” by RSV (NEB “the evil way of this present age”) may, in this context, mean “ruler”, and be parallel to the following “ruler of the power of the air”. In Jas 1.27 the world is a source of infection and evil; and in Jas 4.4 the writer describes friendship with the world as enmity toward God.

This pessimistic view of the world is especially strong in the Gospel of John and 1 John. Here “the world” is humanity in general which is hostile to Jesus,

his message, and his followers (1 Jn 2.15–17). Jesus does not belong to the world (Jn 17.14,16); his followers are in the world (13.1) but they do not belong to the world (15.19; 17.14,16). Christians are commanded not to love the world (1 Jn 2.15). God has transferred Jesus' disciples from (the power of) the world to him (17.6). The enemies of Jesus belong to this world here below, but Jesus is not part of it (8.23). The world hates Jesus and his followers (7.7; 15.18–19; 16.33; 17.14,16; 1 Jn 3.13). The world is under judgment (12.31); so Jesus does not pray for the world (17.9). Jesus prays that the oneness of his followers with himself and his Father will lead the world to believe and to know that he has been sent by God (17.21,23; and see also 14.31; 17.25).

The world does not “know” Jesus (1.10); the world does not “know” the Father (17.25). The world does not see or “know” the Spirit of truth, and so is unable to receive it (14.17). The world does not “know” Christians, because it does not “know” God (1 Jn 3.1).

The world will not see Jesus after he leaves (14.19,22); the world will be glad when Jesus is parted from his disciples (16.20).

The world is ruled by a power hostile to Jesus, that is, the Devil (1 Jn 5.19). This ruler has been condemned (Jn 16.11); he is “coming”, that is, he will manifest his power in a special way (in the trial and death of Jesus) (14.30); but he will be defeated (12.31). Jesus has overcome the world (16.33); Christian faith is the power that overcomes the world (1 Jn 5.4,5); every child of God overcomes the world (1 Jn 5.4).

False prophets belong to the world; that is why the world listens to them when they speak (1 Jn 4.5). Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (18.36).

Other meanings

In two passages it is hard to fit the meaning of *kosmos* into any of the areas of meaning suggested above. 1 Cor 8.4 states “We know that in the world an idol is nothing”; and here the sense seems to be that an idol does not represent anything that really exists. So RSV translates “we know that ‘an idol has no real existence’ ” (GNB “we know that an idol stands for something that does not really exist”). Here “in the world” seems to mean “real” or “actual”. And in Jas 3.6 the writer calls the tongue “a world of iniquity”, by which he seems to mean an organized system of evil. Here a translation may have to speak of the tongue's activity and not simply of the tongue itself, even though that is how the biblical writer speaks of it.

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THE SELECTION OF A TRANSLATION TEAM

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Nothing is more important for the success of a translation, both in terms of the quality of the work and the rate at which it can be done, than the selection of the members of a translation team. The quality of the translation will be in proportion to the quality of the people who do the job, and normally the higher the quality of the translators the more rapidly the work will get done.