

14, consists of a collection of messages about the coming Messiah, the restoration of Israel, and God's victory over the nations leading to universal peace. The visions in the first part of the book deal with the return of the exiles, the restoration of Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the Temple and the new age to come. A title for Zechariah could focus on the general note of hope which runs through the whole book. Here are some models for a title: "Zechariah proclaims a new age for Judah", "Zechariah proclaims prosperity, peace and hope for Judah".

**Malachi** belongs to the period after the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. The prophet rebukes both priests and people for the false religion they are practising. The priests are denounced as corrupt religious leaders. They bring to God worthless offerings and they neglect to do God's will and teach the people what is right. Malachi denounces the people for not keeping the covenant. They have broken their marriage vows and made marriages with foreigners. The prophet predicts the coming of God's messenger and God's action to judge and purify his people. The main theme of the book seems to be God's rejection of false worship and this could be a suitable focus for a title. Here are some models: "Malachi rebukes Judah's corrupt priests", "Malachi denounces Judah's false worship", "Malachi proclaims that God rejects the false worship of priests and people".

EUAN FRY

## THE USE AND VALUE OF SECTION HEADINGS IN PRINTED SCRIPTURES

**Rev. Euan Fry** is Translations Secretary for the Bible Society in Australia.

The use of headings for the text of the Bible is a common practice these days. Many editions of the Bible, and parts of the Bible, include section headings within the text as well as the titles which occur at the beginning of each book. And in some Bibles the system of headings is very elaborate indeed.

Some years ago the United Bible Societies prepared a set of section headings covering both the Old Testament and the New Testament. These headings have been made available to translators all over the world, and they are now the basis for the system of headings in many different languages. The UBS system has been used, with some variations, in both the UBS Greek Testament and the Good News Bible.

The situation with regard to headings has not always been the same as it is now. The Hebrew and Greek manuscripts which have come down to us, and apparently the original manuscripts also, do not have a system of headings within the text. They only have the titles which stand at the start of each of the individual books, plus a few other statements in the text which look rather like headings.

We must understand clearly, then, that the headings in modern Bibles are not a part of the original text. They are the work of editors, who include them

to make the text easier for their readers to follow. However a system of headings may reflect the intention and style of the Biblical author, if the editor has done his work carefully.

Even though the original Biblical texts do not seem to have used a regular system of headings, in a number of places we can find statements and expressions which look very much like "headings". For instance at Gen 5.1 we have the opening sentence: "This is a list of the descendants of Adam." (See also Gen 11.10 and 36.1.) And at Gen 6.9 we read: "This is the story of Noah." (And see also Gen 25.19.) Similar expressions in the New Testament can be found at Mt 1.1 and Mt 1.18.

There are many other such "headings" to be found in the text of the Biblical books. The following are just a few of them: Lev 6.14, 7.1, 7.11, Num 33.1, Deut 33.1, Josh 14.1, Prov 25.1, 30.1, 31.1, Isa 13.1, 15.1, 19.1, 21.1, 21.11, 21.13, 22.1, 23.1, Jer 48.1, 49.1, 49.7, 49.23, 50.1, Hab 3.1, 1 Cor 7.1, 12.1, 16.1. There are also many other expressions which indicate the start of a new section of text, even though they do not give a description of the content like a "heading" does.

With all these examples from the Biblical writers before us, I think we may be confident that we are working in the same spirit as they were, when we supply section headings in our modern Scriptures. But of course we must take care to make the headings we use fit the text itself, both in their placing and in their wording.

### What headings do

To the modern day reader, who is familiar with a whole range of printed material, the use of headings can make the Bible appear more like other books, newspapers, and magazines. This is an important benefit of headings in some situations; and it can help to compensate for certain other features which appear strange in the Bible, such as the chapter and verse numbering.

What is more important about the use of headings, however, is that they are a feature which can help the reader in his understanding of the text. Headings help the reader in two ways. Firstly, they divide the text into small sections, which he can take separately and hold within his limited span of memory. And secondly, they give a brief indication of the content of each section, which helps him to read the section in the right light from the start.

The inclusion of headings in the Bible is something that has developed since the invention of printing. Separate headings have become a feature in printed Scriptures, which they were not in books which were copied by hand. And it is really only in recent years that section headings as we know them have become a common feature in Bibles.

Moves towards the use of headings were made quite early in the history of printed Bibles. One such move was the division of the Biblical text into chapters, which actually dates from before the invention of printing. (We must remember that the early Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were not divided at all into chapters and verses.) The chapter divisions, which have been a feature of all **printed** Bibles, have the effect of breaking the text into sections for the benefit of readers. But unfortunately those who were responsible for doing

this did not always divide the text into chapters at the most appropriate places—as every translator knows!

Another quite early move was the placing of “running” headings at the top of each page or column of type, as a means of indicating the content of the text. But here again, this procedure was not very effective, because it did not give any indication of where sections of text might have started and finished. And it had to depend on the arrangement of the text on the various pages, rather than following the natural divisions of the text itself. In fact the running headings would have to vary from one edition to another, even of the same translation, because the division of the text into pages was different.

To get over the difficulty of matching running headings to the text, some editions used brief summaries of the content at the beginning of each new chapter. (These summaries were printed in a style of type different from the type used for the text.) When they did this, the editors of these editions showed that they recognized the need for a better system of showing the reader the content of each section in advance. But they were not yet ready to let the division of the text by a system of headings take over from the rather artificial chapter division system.

### **Preparing good headings**

We have already seen that the main things section headings do are to divide the text into sections and to give the reader a brief indication of the content of each section. A good system of headings is one that does these things effectively for the reader, and in a way that is faithful to the meaning and style of the original Biblical author.

In deciding on the most appropriate places for headings, we should try to be guided by the natural divisions of the text itself. Where there are statements like headings in the text, or other indications of a transition from one topic to another, we may take these as proper places for headings. Elsewhere we may need to make a thorough study of the text, with the help of handbooks and commentaries, in order to understand the author’s structure and to place the headings where he would have been most likely to place them himself. (For most translators such a thorough study of the text would be a necessary part of their translation procedure anyway.)

In choosing the wording for headings, our aim should be to give in a few words the topic of the section. As far as possible this should be the main event or theme. And it will often be possible to take the wording from the text itself. Headings for some passages of text may not be easy to find, however, because the passages contain a succession of events or a collection of themes without a main focus on any one of them. In such cases we may have to be satisfied with a broad collective heading (like “Various Laws” Deut 24.5-25.4), or one which combines references to two or more items (for instance Mt 5.13-16 “Salt and Light”).

### **Headings can show the structure of a book**

Headings not only divide the Biblical text into easy sections for the reader and show him the content section by section. I believe that in many cases well chosen headings can actually help the reader to get a better understanding of

the structure of a book *as a whole*. And for at least some books, an understanding of the structure can lead to a better grasp of the meaning in detail.

This means that the overall arrangement of section headings can be just as important as the placing and the wording of the individual headings. And in this respect there may be a better approach to supplying headings than the simple system prepared by the UBS that has been used in the Good News Bible and many other modern translations.

A simple set of section headings is able to divide a book into units larger than single paragraphs. And for *short* books such as Ruth, Jonah, and some of the shorter New Testament letters, this may be sufficient to show the structure of the book quite well. However in the larger books there will still be far too many sections (each with its heading) to show the main parts of the book clearly.

In the larger books of the Bible one or two **more** levels of headings may be required to group together the small sections with their headings into larger units which can show how the whole book is constructed. The Good News Bible seems to recognize this need for a higher level of headings, because it does actually supply these headings in a few places. The book of Daniel, for instance, is divided into two main sections: THE STORY OF DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS (chapters 1 to 6), and DANIEL DESCRIBES HIS VISIONS (chapters 7 to 12). Each of these main sections consists of a number of small sections with their own section headings. In the book of Ezekiel also there are three main headings which group together a number of smaller sections: these cover chapters 1-7, 8-10 and 40-48.

The Jerusalem Bible, in both its English and French versions, is a good example of how headings can be used to reveal the overall structure of the longer books. It makes use of three levels of headings for some books, and two levels for others, to divide each book first of all into a small number of main parts, and then each part into subsections in some cases. A different style and placing of type is used to show the different levels of headings.

The following is a list of the main headings used for Matthew's gospel in the Jerusalem Bible, to illustrate how a fuller system of headings works.

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS                    | (1.1-2.23)    |
| 2. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PROCLAIMED                  |               |
| A. Narrative section                                 | (3.1-4.25)    |
| B. The evangelical discourse                         | (5.1-7.29)    |
| 3. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS PREACHED                 |               |
| A. Narrative section: ten miracles                   | (8.1-9.37)    |
| B. The apostolic discourse                           | (10.1-42)     |
| 4. THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN              |               |
| A. Narrative section                                 | (11.1-12.50)  |
| B. The parabolic discourse                           | (13.1-52)     |
| 5. THE CHURCH, FIRST-FRUITS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN |               |
| A. Narrative section                                 | (13.53-17.27) |
| B. The discourse on the church                       | (18.1-35)     |
| 6. THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN   |               |
| A. Narrative section                                 | (19.1-23.39)  |
| B. The eschatological discourse                      | (24.1-25.46)  |
| 7. PASSION AND RESURRECTION                          | (26.1-28.20)  |

(Each of the subsections indicated by a heading in this list actually contains a number of smaller sections each with its own section heading.)

As I have already said, I believe that a system of two or three levels of headings can be very useful in helping readers to see the overall structure of a longer book. And there are certain books which lend themselves particularly to this kind of treatment. However, it is necessary to add a word of caution to this.

If it is important to study the Biblical text carefully in preparing section headings, it is even more important when we are considering headings for larger sections of the various books. Just as in the translation of the text itself, it is our responsibility to reflect the structure which the Biblical author himself has given to the material, both in the division of a book into its main parts and in the wording we use for the headings. We have no right to impose an artificial structure of our own on any book, even though there may be people who would like us to do so.

It will also be most important again, in recognizing the overall structure of a book, to make a careful study of the book with the use of handbooks and commentaries. Where there is general agreement among the commentaries, we may safely follow their advice in the division of a book into parts. However, for those books where there does not seem to be any agreement, it will be better for us to leave them undivided, so that we do not impose something which was not in the author's mind.

There is an important practical consideration for us if we prepare a system of two or three levels of headings for any book. We must be careful that our choice of type and spacing for the different levels of heading clearly shows which headings mark the main sections of the book and which headings belong to the subsections and the smallest sections. If readers are not able to recognize and distinguish the different types of headings, the whole scheme of headings is likely to be more confusing than helpful. (As you will see from the list of headings given above, the Jerusalem Bible does in fact use a system of numbers and letters as well as different styles of type to help its readers distinguish between the different types of headings.)

### **Conclusion**

It is part of our responsibility as translators to prepare the various helps for the reader that will be included in the printed Bible. And headings are probably the most important of all the helps; so we should take time to prepare them carefully.

As we prepare the headings we must give the same thought to the situation and needs of our readers as we do in other aspects of our translation work. And the best time to do this will be while we are actually studying the text and making the translation. This is better than doing it as an afterthought when we are getting the manuscript ready for printing.

While it is not the place of headings to cover up weaknesses in a translation, a good set of headings will serve to make any translation easier to read and understand.