

In each case the infinitive begins with the letters *ku-* or *ko-*. It is clearly impossible to use the first two letters of the names of these books because they would all be the same. If the first three letters are used for the abbreviated title, some books would still have identical short forms since the stems of two or more words might begin with the same letter. Therefore, it is necessary to base the abbreviated form on the stem of the word rather than the first letters.

In everything he does the translator should keep in mind the average reader and try to decide what is easiest and best for that person to understand the Scriptures. The same rule should apply to the translation of the titles of the books of the Old Testament and the abbreviated forms that are chosen.

BASIL REBERA

BOOK TITLES (2): THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

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In the article before this one the author has explained how the translators of the Septuagint used the titles of the books to give their readers something of the message of each book. The same thing can be done with titles in modern translations for the prophetic books of the Bible. And in this article I want to make some suggestions along these lines.

For the prophetic books we could use titles that contain both the name of the writer or central figure in each book and the message associated with that person. For one thing this would preserve something of the traditional titles in existing translations, which have only the name of the prophet or an expression such as "The Book of (Name of the prophet)". It would also mean that the name of the prophet could be used as a convenient short title at the top of the pages of the text and as the basis for an abbreviated title for references.

It is not possible to always produce descriptive titles of two or three words for the prophetic books when the focus of the title is a prophetic theme or a combination of themes. Some of the models for titles given below may seem a bit long. But they are only models, and the translator will often be able to come up with something more concise while using constructions that are natural in his own language.

Two books included with the prophets

There are two books of the Bible that are frequently linked with the prophetic books, because the English Bible includes them within its arrangement of the prophetic books from Isaiah to Malachi. These books are Lamentations and Daniel, which in the Hebrew Bible are placed in the group of Holy Writings and not among the Prophets.

There are some traditions that make the prophet Jeremiah the author of **Lamentations**, and the title in certain versions bears that prophet's name. There is, however, no mention of the name of Jeremiah in the Hebrew text of the book. It would be best to have a title that is impersonal and focuses only on the message of the book. The book contains poems lamenting the destruction of

Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the exile of its people. The message could be expressed in a title such as "Laments concerning Jerusalem", or "Laments over Jerusalem" or "Lamenting about Jerusalem". The type of construction used by the translator will depend on his language. If the language requires a verb with an explicit subject then "Jerusalem laments" or "The people of Jerusalem lament" are possibilities.

Daniel has two main parts. The first part is an account of Daniel and his friends and the second part contains a series of visions seen by Daniel. It is in the first part that we find the story of Daniel's faith in God and his obedience that resulted in his being thrown into the lion's den. This is perhaps the best known part of the message of the book. The translator may select a title that focuses on this part of the message. "Daniel's faith and obedience", "Daniel's loyalty to the Living God", "Daniel shows loyalty to the True God" are suggestions for possible titles. Or the translator may wish to select a title that focuses on the message contained in the visions. Daniel's vision of the downfall of empires has a message of hope that God will free his people from foreign pagan oppression.

The major prophets

Like Daniel many of the prophetic books have more than one theme, and the translator may choose what is considered to be the main theme, or one of the major themes, or even a combination of themes for focus in the title. **Isaiah** not only has more than one theme but most scholars agree that the contents of the book relate to two different periods in Judah's history. If the title is to include the name Isaiah the focus should be on the message of Chapters 1-39. This is the part of the book that belongs to the earlier period, and in which the name of the prophet is found. (The name Isaiah is not found in Chapters 40-66.) Isaiah's condemnation of the nation's sin and disobedience to God and his call to the people to a life of justice and right living are two of the major themes of Chapters 1-39. Another attractive focus for a title would be Isaiah's portrayal of universal peace and the ideal king (Chapter 11). Some models for a title are: "Isaiah summons a nation to do justice", "Isaiah condemns a nation's sin and disobedience", "Isaiah's vision of peace and just rule".

Jeremiah the prophet warned the people of Judah that their sins of injustice, idolatry and disobedience to God would bring a great disaster to the nation. And Jeremiah himself lived to see this disaster. The powerful nation of Babylon conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and took away its people into exile. But Jeremiah also prophesied that the people would return from exile to their homeland. One of the great themes of Jeremiah's message is God's promise that He will make a new covenant with his people. It is a covenant that each one will know and keep without instructions from others, because God will put it in people's hearts. Some models for a title are: "Jeremiah's warnings of disaster to a sinful Judah", "Jeremiah's prophecy of a New Covenant".

Ezekiel was a young prophet who lived and prophesied at the same time as Jeremiah. He was among the first set of exiles to be sent to Babylon before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. His message was for both the exiles in Babylon and the people still living in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's message can be divided into many parts, but for the purpose of selecting a title the translator

could focus on the two major themes. Chapters 4-32 contain prophecies of judgement and doom on Jerusalem and the nations. Chapters 33-48 contain the conditions, promises and visions of restoration. A title could perhaps focus on the major themes: "Ezekiel's message to Judah of punishment and restoration", "Ezekiel prophesies disaster and restoration for his people", "Ezekiel proclaims God's judgement on sinful Judah".

The minor prophets

Hosea's message was directed against the northern kingdom of Israel. He portrays the unfaithfulness of Israel to God as adultery. Hosea's message also has two major themes. God will punish Israel for being unfaithful to him, and God himself will also repair the broken relationship. Hosea's message of God's love and restoration of Israel is a very moving one. Once again it may be possible to focus on both themes in a title. Some possibilities are: "Hosea's message of God's love to unfaithful Israel", "Hosea proclaims God's judgement and his love for unfaithful Israel". The translator may wish to construct a title to focus on just one of the themes. Some suggestions for such a title are: "Hosea proclaims that God will punish unfaithful Israel", "Hosea's message of God's love for Israel". A title for **Joel** could focus on any of the individual themes of the book or on a combination of themes. The theme of judgement is contained in Joel's description of the land devastated by a locust plague and drought. A second theme is the call to repentance following on the description of judgement. The third theme is the promise that God will restore the land to fertility again. And the promise of restoration is followed by the promise that God will send his spirit on all the people, men and women, young and old. Some possible titles are: "Joel prophesies that God will destroy the land", "Joel calls God's people to repentance", "Joel proclaims that God will destroy the land and later restore it", "Joel prophesies that God will give His spirit to all the people".

The focus for a title for **Amos** seems clearly to be a single one. Amos prophesied in the northern kingdom of Israel. He spoke a message of God's harsh judgement on Israel for its corruption, the perversion of religion, and above all the denial of justice and the oppression of the poor and powerless. Here are some suggestions for a title: "Amos denounces Israel's corruption, injustice and oppression of the poor", "Amos denounces Israel's cruel oppression of the poor", "Amos proclaims that God will punish Israel for oppressing the poor".

Obadiah is a prophecy of judgement against Judah's neighbour Edom. After Judah went into exile in Babylon, Edom raided and looted Jerusalem. Obadiah's message was that Edom would be punished along with other nations who were enemies of Israel. Suggestions for a title: "Obadiah proclaims that God will punish Edom", "Obadiah's message of God's judgement against Israel's enemy, Edom".

A title for **Jonah** would need a different approach to the titles for the other prophetic books. Jonah does not contain a series of prophecies as the other prophetic books do. It is rather an account of what happens to a prophet who tries to run away instead of obeying God's command. The message of Jonah is not in what the prophet says, but in what the narrator says about God as he

tells what happened to Jonah. The message of the book has two main themes. One is the lordship of God over His creation and over the nations. The other is God's great mercy. Perhaps the latter should be preferred as the focus in a title. Here is a title which is a bit long, but one that suggests a different approach to Jonah: "Jonah sees God's forgiveness and mercy on the enemies of his people". Another possibility is: "Jonah learns of God's great mercy". Another suggestion for a title with a focus on Jonah's disobedience might be: "Jonah, the prophet who tried to disobey God".

Micah's message to the people of Judah was much the same as Amos' message to the northern Kingdom of Israel. Micah proclaimed God's judgement on those who perverted justice and oppressed the poor in Judah. Like Isaiah, Micah also announces God's promise of universal peace under His rule. Though Micah denounces injustice and oppression as sternly as Amos does, he has a clearer message of hope that God will save his people. Any of these themes of the book could be selected as a focus for a title. All three themes could be combined in the one title such as, "Micah denounces injustice and also proclaims hope and universal peace". Other possibilities are: "Micah's message against injustice and oppression of the poor". "Micah proclaims universal peace under God's rule".

Nahum contains a vision of the fall of Nineveh as God's punishment on Assyria, Israel's cruel and arrogant enemy. "Nahum predicts God's punishment of Israel's enemy Nineveh", "Nahum's message of judgement on Nineveh, Israel's enemy", are possibilities for a title for Nahum.

Habakkuk cries out against the violence of his own people and then against the brutality and violence of the powerful conquering Babylonians. The prophet predicts doom on the unrighteous and ends his message with a great affirmation of faith in God in the midst of the trouble around him. The translator could construct a title to focus on Habakkuk's complaints against violence or his own response of faith and trust in God; or he might combine the themes in the title. Instances of this last approach are: "Habakkuk's faith in God in the midst of violence", "Habakkuk declares his faith and trust in God in a time of violence". A possible title with a single focus would be "Habakkuk complains to God about violence in his time".

Zephaniah contains the three familiar prophetic themes: the message of judgement, the call to repentance and the promise of restoration. Judah will be punished for idolatry on the day of the Lord's judgement. Israel's neighbours will also be punished. After punishment Jerusalem will be restored. Some of the earlier models for titles focusing on these prophetic themes will serve as models for Zephaniah.

Haggai contains brief messages concerning the rebuilding of the Temple. This is the main theme of the book. The exiles had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and had gone about their business, but the Temple still lay in ruins. A focus on the rebuilding of the Temple would make a suitable title for Haggai. One suggestion for the title is: "Haggai proclaims God's command to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem".

Zechariah consists of two distinct parts. The prophecies of the first part, chapters 1-8, are in the form of a series of visions. The second part, chapters 9-

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

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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