SCOT Gospel of John Kindle Edition Preface

Note: This <u>detailed</u> description is <u>NOT included in the paperback version</u> of the SCOT Gospel of John.

   The main purpose of this Kindle version of the SCOT Gospel of John is to provide an inexpensive means to evaluate the SCOT Gospel of John paperback edition. This 99-cent Kindle version includes much detailed information that will help in the evaluation process, including many critical notes (using Kindle-style links) that you would expect to find in a regular Bible concerning the Greek text. (The critical notes alone justify the purchase of this Kindle version of the Gospel of John.) Many of the notes would not be appropriate for a Gospel that is used for evangelism, so they do not appear in this paperback edition.
   The SCOT Gospel of John, Giant Print Paperback edition utilizes 12-point font which is typical for most Giant Print Bibles. It was produced by Stones Cry Out Ministries to fill a special evangelism ministry need. For mass evangelism, smaller, cheaper gospels are probably better suited because of their low cost. But in some situations, a nicer, Giant Print gospel may be worth the extra cost. For people who seem to have a genuine desire to learn about God and His salvation plan, the SCOT Gospel of John, Giant Print edition is perfect. Not only does it include a solid version of the Gospel of John, it also includes a concise summary of the Bible's redemption message after the gospel concludes. (It is called ***The Bible's Message Summarized*** and it was written by Thomas Bear, the founder of Stones Cry Out Ministries.) If God the Father is drawing a person to Jesus, the SCOT Gospel of John provides all the truth necessary for a person that is transitioning from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light.
   The SCOT Gospel of John is a translation from the original Greek Byzantine Textform, sometimes referred to as the Majority Greek Text, more specifically, Family 35. It is a <u>precise translation</u> of the original Greek text. It is translated directly from the original Greek text. It is <u>not</u> a revision of a previous English version, nor is it a paraphrase. The translation is more literal, word-for-word as opposed to the thought-for-thought approach utilized in many other versions today.

Specification and translation conventions:

   Some translations opt for what is called a dynamic equivalent approach. The goal of such an approach is   a text that is very easy to read. The NIV is an example of this approach.
   The translators for Bibles such as the NASB, ESV, NKJ and KJV had guidelines to translate using a more literal, word-for-word approach. The SCOT Gospel of John adheres to this more literal, word-for-word approach to translation, perhaps more than any of these others mentioned here.
   The goal of the more literal, word-for-word approach is to accurately convey the meaning of the original text while at the same time making it easy and enjoyable to read. In many passages, tension arises for the translator. He wants the text to accurately convey

the meaning of the original Greek, word-for-word if possible. But in some passages, doing so **word-for-word would make the translation clumsy to read.[1]**

In many passages, the translators must abandon their word-for-word approach and insert other words to get the point across in an easier to read fashion.

This is evident when examining John 9:21 as just one example. When the Pharisees questioned the parents of the man born blind, the parents eventually said, *"He is of age; ask him."* A literal word-for-word translation is, *"He has age, ask him."* This literal, word-for-word translation is not what English-speaking people expect to hear. So, translators typically abandon the literal, word-for-word approach and opt for a more commonly used expression that English-speaking people would expect. The non-word-for-word translation, *"He is of age,"* effectively communicates what the author intended to say. So, while it is not an exact word-for-word translation, it is still a good and reliable translation.

In some passages, certain Bibles abandon the word-for-word translation approach in order to achieve an easier read. For example, some of the Bibles that advertise themselves as more literal, translate John 16:1 as follows: *These things I have spoken to you so that you may not be made to stumble*. The **ESV,** which advertises itself as more literal, abandons the word-for-word approach and translates it as: *"I have said all these things to you **to keep you from falling away**."* In this case, the ESV does indeed communicate the main point of this verse very clearly. But this is definitely not a word-for-word translation of this verse and as a result, it fails to communicate everything John had in mind.**[2]** (FYI, John 16:1 is an example of one of the more clumsy-sounding passages when translated using the word-for-word approach.)

The SCOT translation is probably not as easy to read as some popular translations because a higher emphasis was placed on accuracy. The SCOT translation retains a word-for-word translation in many verses that the other translations do not. We consider accuracy to be more important than having a text that is easier to read. Though we claim that it more faithfully translates **word-for-word[1]** from the original Greek, we believe that the end product is still sufficiently easy for most literate, English speaking people to read.

This is not meant to be a criticism of the translation work in the popular English Bibles. Examination of their work proves that they did an excellent job while following the guidelines provided to them. But the guidelines for the SCOT differed slightly. The SCOT guidelines placed a higher emphasis on literal, word-for-word translation than they did for ease of reading.

Not only was it a goal to produce a highly accurate translation, we also wanted to go beyond and provide one that captures some of the original meaning that the other translations intentionally leave out for the sake of easier reading. To illustrate, in the preface of the 1977 edition of the **New American Standard Bible**, the following statement is made: "***As for sequence of tenses, the translators took care to follow English rules rather than Greek in translating Greek presents, imperfects and aorists."*** This resulted in an easier to read translation but some of the original flow was unavoidably lost. Generally, the SCOT translation translates the Greek tenses so that the original intent and style of the author (John) shows up in the English text.

There are a few other features of the SCOT translation that draw attention to the original Greek expression. One of them is the translation of the 2nd person plural pronoun

(you). The English uses the word "you" for both singular and plural applications. The Greek more accurately specifies whether the "you" is singular (talking to one person) or plural (talking to multiple people). If it is obvious from the context that Jesus is talking to multiple people, the word "you" is used with no notation even though the Greek pronoun is actually plural. But in some situations in which Jesus is talking to just one person, the plural version of "you" might suddenly appear in the Greek. This occurs for example in the conversations with Nathaniel, the woman at the well and Nicodemus. In such situations, an attempt is made to call attention to the plural usages when it is deemed important. This is sometimes done with a footnote and sometimes done by adding a word or two in the text itself in italic font.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the SCOT translation is the translation of the Greek preposition *eis*. When used with non-stative verbs, this preposition conveys movement into or toward the accusative noun it precedes. An English example is, "He ran <u>into</u> *(eis)* the house."

Most translations opt to translate this preposition *(eis)* as **"in"³** for passages that talk about believing in Jesus. For example, when translating John 3:16, most Bibles say something like, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes IN Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* This translation may sound better to the English-speaking person but it does not accurately capture what the author had in mind about believing. So, even though it sounds clumsy in the English, the SCOT translation opts to translate the Greek preposition *eis* as "into" in order to draw attention to the nature of believing that John had in mind when he wrote his gospel *("whoever believes **into** Him"*). We believe that this clumsy rendition is both accurate and at the same time effective in calling attention to the nature of saving faith.

Another notable feature are footnotes for some present tense verbs in either the indicative or in the subjunctive mood. The indicative mood present tense Greek verbs speak of something that is happening right now (like English present tense). But the Greek present tense also conveys the idea of continuation. For example, John 3:16 in the typical English Bible says, "whoever believes in Him." But the Greek present tense here more accurately means, "whoever is believing and continues believing into Him." (These are the ones that do not perish.)

Subjunctive mood verbs are used whenever there are conditions that must be met. Often, clauses that begin with *if* or *so that* will include verbs in the subjunctive mood. Generally, when John used verbs in the subjunctive mood, he used the aorist tense as the "go to" default (aspectually flat). Rarely, he chose to specify present tense. When NT authors chose to step outside the default, they normally wanted to communicate something in a very purposeful way. Because John rarely used certain subjunctive mood verbs in the present tense, we can safely conclude that he was calling attention to the idea of <u>continuation</u>. So, instead of phrases like, "if you do these things," John was actually saying something more like, "if you are doing and continue doing these things." The SCOT Gospel of John includes footnotes for certain present tense verbs to draw attention to this idea of continuation.

On a few occasions, John employed a special literary technique to emphasize a negative. (John 4:14; 6:35, 37; 8:12, 51; 10:5, 28; 11:26 and 20:25.) **In these few instances, John**

was not just saying "no," he was saying "NO." Since the subjunctive mood does not normally convey the idea of certainty, it would seem on the surface that John was saying something like "maybe not." But the opposite is true. When the Greek expression "*ou me*" ("no" in English) is combined with a verb in the subjunctive mood, (aorist or future tense), just the potential of it not being no is denied. It rules out the possibility of it not being no.[4] On these few occasions when John used this special literary technique, all caps are used to draw attention. (For example in John 6:37, instead of "I will not cast out," the SCOT translation says "I will NOT cast out.")

Another thing that the reader will notice is John's frequent use of present tense verbs in historical narratives. This is another literary technique that John used to bring the reader into the story. Here is an example: *"Now Phillip was from Bethsaida, from the town of Andrew and Peter. Phillip **finds** Nathanael and **says** to him, "We have found the One about whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote" (John 1:44-45).*

Another notable feature of the SCOT Gospel of John is the translation of the Greek expression, "*ego ami*." (The Greek expression "*ego ami*" means "I am" in English.) Perhaps the most significant verse that contains this expression is when Jesus said, "Before Abraham existed, I AM" (John 8:58). This same Greek expression is used by the Septuagint Greek Old Testament in Exodus 3:14. There, God told Moses that His name is "I AM." This is also found in the Septuagint Greek book of Isaiah in a similar fashion. *"Who has wrought and done these things? he has called it who called it from the generations of old; I God, the first and to all futurity, I AM" (Isaiah 41:4).* Other examples could be given. Throughout his gospel, John used this expression, even sometimes when it seems awkward. For example, when Jesus introduced Himself as Messiah to the woman at the well, He said, "The One who is speaking to you- I AM" (John 4:26). Other translations say something like, "I who speak to you am He." The SCOT Gospel of John consistently translates this expression literally and with all caps as I AM. In some cases, like the case of John 4:26, the pronoun *He* is added (italic font indicating an added word) to make it a little less awkward sounding in English. ("The One who is speaking to you- I AM *He*.") The SCOT Gospel of John is used in evangelism so it draws much attention to the deity of Christ using footnotes where appropriate. The translation of "*ego ami*" as "I AM" is another way to draw attention to the deity of Jesus and it is warranted since John purposely used this expression to draw attention to it.

Lastly, like in most other versions, in the SCOT translation, all English words in ***italic font*** do not appear in the original Greek. They were added in English to fill in thoughts that seem to be implied by the context or on rare occasion, to accommodate translation into English when Greek grammatic structure makes word-for-word translation difficult. Also, all nouns and pronouns that refer to **J**esus have their first letter capitalized.

Suggestion: To further help you evaluate the SCOT Gospel of John, we recommend that you turn on an audible Bible using one of the more literal versions and follow along reading the SCOT Gospel of John. This way, you will see that all of the ideas conveyed in the other reputable versions are also expressed by the SCOT Gospel of John.

End Notes

1. This note does not appear in the paperback edition.

   The expression "word-for-word translation" does not actually mean that each word in the Greek is translated into an English word in the precise order it is found in the original Greek. Word order is often very different in N.T. Greek sentences. For example, often, the subject (nominative noun) is found near the end of the sentence rather than near the beginning as you would expect in English. The verb associated with the subject sometimes appears at the very end of the sentence. So, if each Greek word was translated into an English word in the order it is found in the original Greek, it may not make sense to the English reader.

   By *word-for-word translation*, we mean that an attempt is made to translate each Greek noun into an appropriate English noun that retains the same case as the Greek noun. Likewise, an attempt is made to translate each Greek adjective into an appropriate English adjective. Also, an attempt is made to translate each Greek verb into an appropriate English verb. Sometimes, this requires more than one English word because Greek verbs usually contain much more information that English verbs. Greek verbs include designations that include various "moods," tenses and voice all in a single word, (not to mention designation of 1st, 2nd, 3rd person, singular vs. plural, etc.). To translate into English, other words often have to be added to convey these elements.

   Often, there is a temptation to convert the various Greek words in a sentence into English words that are not even the same category. An English adjective might be used in place of a Greek verb or noun. Or an English noun and adjective might be used in place of Greek verbs. A word-for-word translation attempts to translate Greek parts of speech into equivalent English parts of speech. A translation that does this most consistently <u>may</u> help the English-only reader to interpret the passage with more accuracy when he is doing serious Bible study without the assistance of Greek study tools.

2. Explanation as to why the ESV is not a "word-for-word" translation in John 16:1.
*"I have said all these things to you **<u>to keep you from falling away</u>**"(John 16:1).* For the most part, the first part of the verse is a word-for-word translation of the Greek with the exception of the word "all." (*All* is not in the text.) But it is the second part (bold, underlined part) that serves as an example of what can happen when translation utilizes a thought-for-thought translation approach. Transliterated, the Greek reads, *ina mee skandalistheeta.   Mee* means "not." *Ina* means "so that" or "that." The wording of the ESV does indeed make a purpose statement which conveys the idea behind the word *ina.* It is the longer word (a verb) that deserves the most attention. *Skandalistheeta* means "be made to stumble." This verb is in the subjunctive mood which carries an indefinite idea that is not conveyed well if at all in the ESV wording. The more literal meaning of this verb is conveyed in the phrase, "that you might not be made to stumble." So, Jesus said these things that they "might not" be made to stumble. The words "might not" go along with His purpose, but there is something indefinite being

conveyed that is not really being conveyed in the ESV wording. Instead, the ESV uses an infinitive, "*to keep*" *you from falling away*. Jesus' purpose for saying "these things" is conveyed using the infinitive "to keep" but by choosing this approach, the indefinite aspect ("that you might not") is missing from the verse. And, since it is Jesus talking, the reader might come away thinking that because it was Jesus talking, then their being kept was a done deal. But this is not actually conveyed in the Greek. This explanation is provided to illustrate what can happen whenever the translator veers from a word-for-word approach.

3. This note is not in the paperback edition.
The English preposition "in" implies no movement (stative).

4. This note is not in the paperback edition.
This can be verified by consulting N.T. Greek grammar books. For example, consult **Wallace, Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament, 1996 p. 468 Zondervan** *(under the heading 'c. Emphatic Negation Subjunctive.')*