



Lutheran Bible Translators

Constructive Word

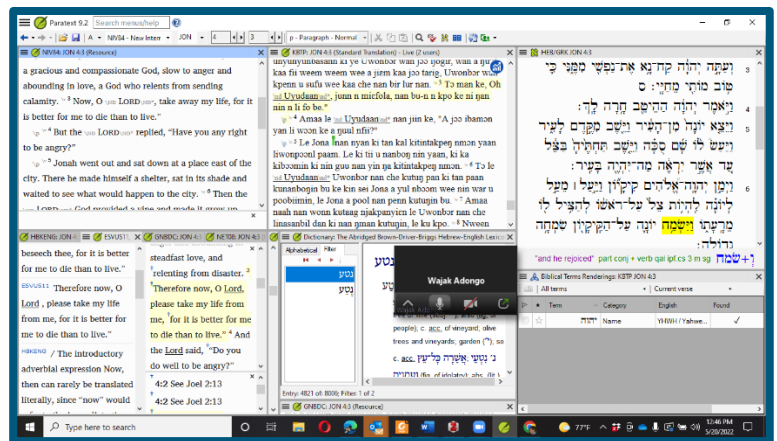
The Esala Prayer Letter

Summer 2022

Dear friends,

Good news! Recently, the Komba Bible translation team has made a breakthrough in translating Old Testament proverbs! Here's part of the story. Mr. Michael Erslund, the LBT Exegetical, Technological, and Translation Resource Person assigned to the Komba project, he has been in Ghana for five years. (Where has the time gone?) Michael compiled and analyzed 100 Komba proverbs. Michael presented his paper to the team, and the team made suggestions for improving the analysis. Together with the team, they analyzed their draft of the Old Testament book Proverbs and discovered some things they can do to make their translation of Proverbs sound sweet to Komba ears. This is part of our goal of making natural-sounding translations. Yay! Good job, team!

More Good News! When I was doing translation consulting with the team on the minor prophets earlier this week, I noticed the team was applying some of what they were learning about poetic proverbial translation to poetic prophetic translation! Why is this important? Well, poetry sounds like poetry. If the ancient biblical text uses alliteration and assonance, contemporary translations can also use poetic features. The features of poetry may not be the same between Hebrew and Komba, but something that sounds poetic in one language might be able to sound analogously poetic in another.



A screenshot of Nathan's computer while translation checking over zoom with colleagues in Ghana. Predominantly we use voice. Occasionally we use screen sharing. Meetings begin at 5 AM Eastern Daylight Time.

For example, I have been doing a lot of Bible study work on the lament of Job in Job 3 with various groups. Those study experiences have motivated me to try my hand at translation. Normally, English translators focus on translating the “meaning” of Hebrew words and the “grammar” of Hebrew phrases, but we often neglect the poetic features of language. Here is my attempt to employ some poetic features in an English translation. (And no, this text does not sound like **good news**. Still, it is a poetically beautiful lament!)

Job 3:4-5

⁴ That **day**—let it be darkness!

Do not call for it, God above.

Shine no light upon it.

⁵ Darkness and deep shadow descend on it.

Clouds cover it.

Day darkening evil eclipse, excise it!

If you compare this version with your favorite English Bible, you may find some things are different, yet I think this version effectively translates Job's Hebrew verses, including some of the poetic sound and feel of the Hebrew poetry.



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Praise God for...

- technology that helps us communicate (however imperfectly) across distances.

Pray for...

- Sarah as she travels to Tanzania and Botswana (postponed from May) for strategic planning meetings in June and July.
- Nathan as he meets regularly with the Komba team to consultant check Old Testament portions.

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- Ephesians 4:12-13

Translation Checking Update: This week I am doing "virtual" translation checking with the Komba team on the minor prophets. One of the big challenges is that each of the translators on the Komba team has other responsibilities in their churches, schools, and communities. They are all working more than one full-time job! It has been difficult to get the entire team together for an entire week. This week we are meeting Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting at 5 AM Eastern time. It would not have been worthwhile to fly to Ghana for 3 days of work but given the fact I know the language and have strong relationships with the team, this works relatively well. We do not get as much done as we would get done in person because of "zoom fatigue." Still, we are making steady progress. Thanks be to God.

With gratitude! *Nathan for the Esala family*

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