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EXODUS 12:14

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

> And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and YE SHALL KEEP IT A FEAST to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:14 AV)

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

People assume that the Bible here calls THE PASSOVER "a feast". But that is not at all the case.

THE MISTRANSLATION

In this verse we have a mistranslation of a personal pronoun, as well as a totally inappropriate division into verses.

THE SOURCE OF THIS WRONG TRANSLATION

The text was only divided into verses long after it had originally been written, and those divisions are not in any way "inspired". But these verse divisions do have a major influence in how we understand any text. In this verse we have a clear example of a mistranslation coupled with an inappropriate division into verses.

First notice how this verse is translated in Green's Literal Translation

> And the day shall be a memorial for you. And you shall celebrate it [as] a feast to Jehovah, for your generations. You shall celebrate it [as] a law forever. (Exodus 12:14 LIT)

Notice that Green presents this verse as THREE SEPARATE SENTENCES. The first part is given as a complete sentence on its own. This I believe is a correct representation for the following reasons.

1) One theme, the Passover, goes from verse 3 to the end of the first sentence in verse 14. THAT CONCLUDES THE DISCUSSION OF THE PASSOVER. Thus it summarizes the Passover as follows:

> "And the day (or THIS day, the 14th of Nisan) shall be a memorial for you."

2) THE NEXT SENTENCE IN VERSE 14 THEN STARTS A NEW SUBJECT, the Days of Unleavened Bread, which discussion continues up to verse 20 inclusive. So the discussion of the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread starts with the statements in verse 14 that read:

> "And you shall celebrate IT [as] a feast to YHVH, for your generations. You shall celebrate it [as] a law forever."

3) Our English language translations imply that this is a reference to the day that has been PREVIOUSLY discussed until this point in time (i.e. the Passover) by the use of the third person pronoun "IT" in: "... and you shall celebrate IT (!) as a feast to the Eternal"! It is natural for us to assume that the "IT" here must refer to the antecedent, which is the discussion of the Passover.

BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE AT ALL!

4) The Hebrew word here translated as "IT" ("you shall celebrate IT ...") is NOT A THIRD PERSON PRONOUN AT ALL! It is in fact A SECOND PERSON PRONOUN, meaning "YOU", either singular or plural in its different variations.

5) While "it" would refer to the day that has been discussed in the previous verses, the pronoun "YOU" most certainly does not refer to "ANY DAY"; it refers to THE PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING ADDRESSED.

6) The Hebrew pronoun incorrectly translated as "it" in Exodus 12:14 is "attah" and it is a SECOND PERSON pronoun! The Hebrew text here clearly reads "YOU" and NOT "IT"!

Every translation I have checked translates this pronoun as "IT" in this verse, but that doesn't make it right! Once you understand that the Hebrew text here employs a SECOND PERSON PRONOUN, then you should realize that it is simply incorrect to attempt to translate this pronoun as the third person "it", thereby incorrectly implying a reference to the day PREVIOUSLY discussed. The second sentence discusses THE PEOPLE and not the day!

7) Here are a few examples of where this pronoun "attah", in its various forms, is CORRECTLY translated as "you" in the KJV. In each case I have rendered the translation of "attah" into capital letters for easier recognition. [Other uses of the second person pronouns in the verses below are NOT the Hebrew pronoun "attah"; they are implied by the forms of the nouns and the verbs that are used, but without explicitly stating the pronoun "you".]

> And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because THOU (attah) hast done this, thou [art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (Genesis 3:14 AV)
>
> In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust THOU (attah) [art], and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19 AV)
>
> But with THEE (attah) will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, THOU (attah), and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. (Genesis 6:18 AV)
>
> And YE (attah) know that with all my power I have served your father. (Genesis 31:6 AV)
>
> And YE (attah) my flock, the flock of my pasture, [are] men, [and] I [am] your God, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 34:31 AV)

This should suffice to illustrate that "attah", in its various forms, should be translated as the second person pronoun "YOU" in reference to the people being addressed. IT IS NOT A THIRD PERSON PRONOUN.

8) THIS MEANS THAT THE WORD "IT" IS SIMPLY NOT USED IN EXODUS 12:14!

Using Green's Literal Translation as a basis, the second part of Exodus 12:14 should correctly be translated as:

> "AND YOU (attah) SHALL CELEBRATE A FEAST TO THE ETERNAL for (or throughout) your generations. You shall celebrate it (as) a law forever."

This statement does not in any way refer to the day that has been discussed previously. The expression "celebrate a feast" (the Hebrew words 'chagag chag') refers to THE SEVEN DAY FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD! The First Day and the Seventh Day of that 7- day period are "Holy Days", but the whole 7-day period is "THE FEAST". And Exodus 12:15-20 discusses details pertaining to that 7-day period.

9) Let's change the division into verses to convey the intended meaning correctly.

A) THE KJV READS:

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:14-15 AV)

B) THE CORRECTED DIVISIONS:

Exodus 12:14 reads: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial." (a reference to the Passover)

Exodus 12:15 reads: "And YOU shall celebrate a feast to the Eternal throughout your generations. You shall celebrate it as a law for ever. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread." (a new subject, the Feast of Unleavened Bread)

Exodus 12:15a reads: "Even the first day you shall (have) put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (nothing has been changed, except for HOW the text is divided into verses)

C) THE PARALLEL SCRIPTURES:

Compare this to the parallel passages that state the same thing.

LEVITICUS 23:5-6

Leviticus 23:5 reads: "In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even *is* the LORD'S passover."

Leviticus 23:6 reads: "And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread."

NUMBERS 28:16-17

Numbers 28:16 reads: "And in the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the passover of the LORD."

Numbers 28:17 reads: "And in the fifteenth day of this month *is* the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten."

10) So with the corrected pronoun of "YOU" instead of "it", and with a more appropriate division into verses, BUT WITHOUT CHANGING THE TEXT IN ANY WAY, Exodus 12:14-15 is a clear parallel to Leviticus 23:5-6 and to Numbers 28:16-17. And these passages all make clear that "the feast" is always a reference to the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

THE CORRECT TRANSLATION

Exodus 12:14-15 should really be divided into THREE verses, as presented above, in order to correctly convey the intended meaning.

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

These verses tells us that the Passover (the 14th) is the memorial, and the Feast is a reference to Unleavened Bread (the 15th to the 21st inclusive). This is in full agreement with Leviticus 23 and with Numbers 28.

IN SUMMARY

There is nothing in this verse that would infer that the Passover is to be viewed as "a feast"! The incorrect division into verses presents a totally distorted picture. See also the article "THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD" in the main directory of this website for more information, as well as the article on the mistranslation in Exodus 12:11.

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