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LAMENTATIONS 1:7

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

> Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, *and* did mock at HER SABBATHS. (Lamentations 1:7 AV)

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

This is not a Scripture that impacts on any doctrinal understanding as such, but it does contain a mistranslation.

THE MISTRANSLATION

The Hebrew text of this verse does not have a word for "Sabbaths". This is a mistranslation. The Hebrew word here translated as "Sabbaths" is "mishbath" and this word really means: annihilation, ruin, cessation, etc. But it does not mean "Sabbath".

Most other translations have this correct, and even the NKJV has corrected this mistake. Here are some examples:

> Jerusalem remembereth in the days of her affliction and of her anguish all her treasures that she had from the days of old; now that her people fall by the hand of the adversary, and none doth help her, the adversaries have seen her, they have mocked at HER DESOLATIONS. (Lamentations 1:7 JPS)

> Jerusalem remembereth in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that were from the days of old: When her people fell into the hand of the adversary, and none did help her, The adversaries saw her, they did mock at HER DESOLATIONS. (Lamentations 1:7 ASV)

> In the days of her affliction and homelessness Jerusalem remembers all her precious things That were from the days of old When her people fell into the hand of the adversary, And no one helped her. The adversaries saw her, They mocked at HER RUIN. (Lamentations 1:7 NAS)

> Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and bitterness all the precious things that were hers from days of old. When her people fell into the hand of the foe, and there was none to help her, the foe gloated over her, mocking at HER DOWNFALL. (Lamentations 1:7 RSV)

> In the days of her affliction and roaming, Jerusalem remembers all her pleasant things That she had in the days of old. When her people fell into the hand of the enemy, With no one to help her, The adversaries saw her *And* mocked at HER DOWNFALL. (Lamentations 1:7 NKJV)

THE SOURCE OF THIS WRONG TRANSLATION

In this case the Greek LXX translated the Hebrew "mishbath" basically correctly as "metoikesia", which means "captivity" (literally "removal from one's home"). But in his Latin Vulgate Translation Jerome mistranslated the Hebrew phrase into Latin as "sabbata eius", meaning "her Sabbaths". And this is from where the KJV translators copied this mistake.

Jerome really should have known better than to translate "mishbath" as "Sabbaths". But this obvious mistranslation in the Vulgate illustrates the far-reaching influence the Vulgate had on the early translators into the English language. They often ignored the actual Hebrew text in favour of how this was translated into Latin in the Vulgate version. Keep this example of Lamentations 1:7 in mind when you examine other examples of mistranslations.

THE CORRECT TRANSLATION

The above examples from the JPS, NAS, RSV, NKJV, etc. all convey the correct intent in this verse.

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

This verse states that the enemies of Jerusalem mocked at her ruin and her destruction, rather than at her Sabbaths.

IN SUMMARY

This is not a major verse at all. But it does illustrate the powerful influence of the Vulgate Translation.

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