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JANUARY  
2021

GRACE NOTES  
YOUR ACCESS TO  
GRACE CHURCH



Lay Leader  
Report



Kids Corner

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# GRACE NOTES

## Septuagint:

### The Greek Translation of the Hebrew Scripture

If we have an important project in the life and ministry of our church, we normally launch a special committee, collect useful information and discuss and brainstorm. The committee selects one recording secretary in order to document the whole process. I think this is a democratic practice we Americans take for granted.

Imagine! It was around 2300 years ago in Egypt when one king held absolute rule over the whole country. At that time, when his words and decision were absolute law, there was no committee, no recording secretary, no historically accurate records.

What can we learn from the big project of the translation of the Hebrew Scripture into Greek? No accounts by any Septuagint translator are extant. No records from contemporaries with the translators have been preserved, either. But we are so fortunate as to have one surviving document that tells the origin of the Septuagint.

The document is the Letter of Aristeas, which can be found in a collection of writings called the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. The Letter of Aristeas was written in Greek by Aristeas to his brother Philocrates, describing how the Pentateuch, the first five books, was translated from Hebrew into Greek.

In spite of some historical inaccuracy, Aristeas' account provides valuable

information about how the translation proceeded and what happened during this historic project. Thanks to the inspiring book of Professor Warren Carter, “Seven Events that Shaped the New Testament World,” I was able to learn some interesting details.

Warren Carter was the instructor of my first class, Introduction to the New Testament, in my first semester at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas in 2003.

Here is the backstory Aristeas tells us.

- \* The Egyptian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus commissioned the royal librarian Demetrios to collect all the books of the world. Demetrios suggested including the Jewish law, but it had to be translated into Greek. The king ordered a letter to be sent to the Jewish high priest in Jerusalem, Eleazar, asking for assistance.
- \* The king requested Eleazar to send six educated and virtuous men from each of the twelve tribes to undertake the translation. King Ptolemy chose generous and high-quality gifts for Eleazar.
- \* The high priest selected men of high personal and intellectual quality, competent in Greek and Hebrew. The seventy-two translators arrived in Alexandria to a warm welcome from the king, who bowed seven times before the sacred Hebrew scrolls.
- \* For seven days, the king hosted welcoming banquets and engaged in philosophical and ethical discussion with the translators.
- \* Demetrios escorted the translators to a nearby island to do their translating work. They accomplished their translation into Greek in seventy-two days.
- \* The translation of the Pentateuch was read first to the Alexandrian Jewish community and then to the king. It was received very positively.

We do not know for sure when the translation actually started. It is widely accepted that the translation did not happen at one time (unlike Aristeas’ narrative!) and its process lasted at least a century or more. Scholars tend to date its beginning around 250 BCE and it seems to have been complete around 132 BCE.

While the Pentateuch was being translated into Greek in Alexandria, the prophets were in the process of being recognized as sacred texts. The translation was originally only of the Pentateuch but gradually expanded to include the rest of the other writings and even many apocryphal writings later.

The idea of translation was sanctioned by Jews in Judea and the completed translation was approved and celebrated by Jews in Alexandria when it was read to them. And the translation was also acknowledged by the gentle king Ptolemy.

Of no doubt, God approved the translation. Without divine intervention, the translation was unable to be accomplished. Aristeas noted, therefore, that no changes or additions are to be made to the translation; it is the unchangeable word of God. (Let. Arts. 310-311)

The translation of the Hebrew Scripture into Greek was a human project. But at the same time it was God's province, too. The significance of the translation of Jewish sacred writings into Greek was beyond our imagination. As through the Greek Bible Jewish culture, religion and identity were exposed to the Hellenistic culture, God's word encountered new culture, new people and new world. This Bible gave an enormous impact upon not only the Jews living in Diaspora who could no longer speak Hebrew but also the early Christians who lived when Greek was the dominant language of the world.

The wall of exclusiveness fell and the gate of inclusiveness was widely open. A new way of salvation for Gentile was paved!

Pastor Kyu

### **January Prayer**

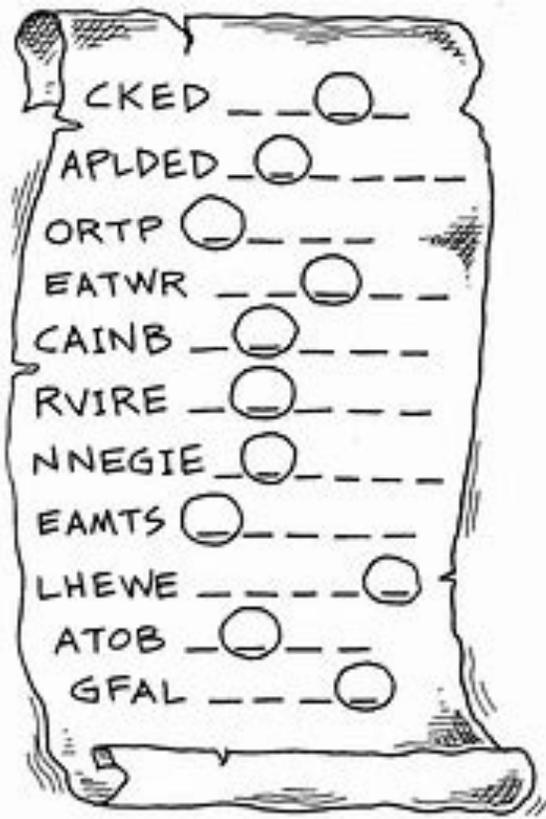
Thank you God for showing us the way. Helps us to remember You this day. Let us always remember the price You paid. Never let us forget that with You we can be saved. Keep us in Your loving arms. So we know that we belong. Guide us and protect us, as we walk in the path that You have set. Even though life can be Very hard, we know that You won't forget. I know that I was never alone. For You are always there guiding my every step with the love You have shown. Amen.

**\*\*\* *Lay Leaders Report* \*\*\***

A New Year's "Reflection"

2021 is only five days old as I put some thoughts together for a new year's Grace Notes! I've just taken my tree down and put the candles in the windows away for another year. I always dislike how dark the house seems without them. The Bedard house has left some outdoor lights on for another week or so, I said to Peter, "I just feel that our world is dark and needs some Christmas lights a bit longer". As I think about that there is deeper truth than just some white twinkling lights needed around my house. We need light. We need His light and not just for the Christmas season! People drive around neighborhoods at Christmas to look at the lights, we are attracted to the beauty of light and how it helps dispel darkness. As Christ followers we have His light within us all the time! We can shine God's light all year long to our families, our loved ones, our friends, to strangers, to those walking in darkness, potentially to the ends of the earth! We can attract others by how our lives defeat darkness. I'm going to leave a few white twinkle lights shining in my house all year as a reminder to never put His light away with a particular season's end but to let His light shine in me. I pray we might all shine for Him in 2021 that others might see that light and wonder, "what are they celebrating?" We can answer in March, July and next December, "we're celebrating our living Lord"! Twinkle on everyone!

Blessings all, Laurie



deck-paddle-port-water  
 cabin- river engine- steam-  
 wheel boat- flag (captains log)



Jesus prayed for His friends.

Use the code to find some of His words.

○=A	◐=E	◑=I	◒=M	▤=Q	◓=U	◔=Y
◕=B	◖=F	◗=J	▥=N	◘=R	◙=V	◚=Z
◛=C	◜=G	◝=K	◞=O	◟=S	◠=W	
◡=D	◣=H	◤=L	◥=P	◦=T	◧=X	

He said, " "

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Winter Word Search**

e q d h o o e d c o a t  
 l w s g b l i z z a r d  
 f m d h k h m i t t e n  
 x s e s a w s n o w t k  
 j w s n o w m a n s v w  
 i n p o k m d r i f t i  
 c p o w a k s c a r f n  
 i t n b b r d c p n i t  
 c l x a v c m c t d c e  
 l e u l h w j z y u m r  
 e f o l i y a t u m r h

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. snow     | 6. blizzard |
| 2. snowball | 7. scarf    |
| 3. coat     | 8. winter   |
| 4. drift    | 9. icicle   |
| 5. snowman  | 10. mitten  |