

# THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATION OF I THESSALONIANS

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The publication of a major translation of the Bible is inevitably greeted by a rash of book reviews, many of which are distinguished by their snap judgements and subjective evaluations. The publication of the *New English Bible* (henceforth referred to as *NEB*) was no exception. However, in the intervening period since publication, the *NEB* has been settling into its niche in the Bible translation scene. It is evident that it will not oust the *King James Version* (= *KJV*) from its position of affection with the Bible-reading public, and it is possible that it may not even prove a rival to some of the other recent translations (at least, not in non-British countries). But it has made an important contribution to the development of English translations and has assured itself of a lasting role in this field.

Now that the hubub of pre- and post-publication publicity has died away, it is time for dispassionate evaluations of the new translation as a translation. The success of this translation, after all, must ultimately be decided, not by the loudness of public acclaim but by the adequacy with which it represents the sense of the original. This can only be determined by detailed examinations of the translation with reference to the Greek. It is thus not the primary purpose of this paper to criticize the theory of translation adopted by the *NEB* Committee, but rather, having accepted their own aims in translation, to judge the success with which they have fulfilled these aims. However, some remarks should be made concerning these aims and the theory of translation adopted.

The most significant aim of the *NEB* Committee was to

produce a work which was independent of all former translations. Unlike most other Committee translations, the purpose of the *NEB* was not to produce a revision, "but a genuinely new translation, in which an attempt should be made to use the idiom of contemporary English to convey the meaning of the Greek."<sup>1</sup> This must mean that we can expect the result to depart at many points from the time-honored phraseology of other translations. Another important factor is the frequency with which the translation becomes paraphrase<sup>2</sup> (the disclaimers of the Committee notwithstanding),<sup>3</sup> and very free paraphrase in some places.<sup>4</sup> It will be seen that much of this paraphrase is unjustified.<sup>5</sup>

A third significant feature of the *NEB* is the determination of the translators to come down on one side or the other when the Greek is possible of several translations.<sup>6</sup> This eschewing of ambiguity, while highly desirable, if taken to extremes, leads the translator well into the field of interpretation. The task of their translation, as the *NEB* Committee themselves state, is "that of understanding the original as precisely as we could . . . , and then saying again in our own idiom what we believed the author to be saying in his."<sup>7</sup> If what the original author has said is ambiguous, then the work of the translator should be to endeavor to translate that same ambi-

<sup>1</sup> *New English Bible* (Oxford, 1961), pp. viii-ix.

<sup>2</sup> Paul E. Davies, "Great Britain's New Translation," *Int*, XV (1961), 344.

<sup>3</sup> *NEB*, p. x.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Rom 3: 21; 2 Cor 1: 24; Gal 2: 17; Eph 2: 14, etc.

<sup>5</sup> In a recent study on translation problems, Theophile J. Meek, "Old Testament Translation Principles", *JBL*, LXXXI (1962), 143-154, has advocated the very limited use of paraphrase and then only in the following circumstances: (1) when a literal translation does not make sense; (2) when a literal translation does not convey the thought of the original; or (3) when a literal translation violates the English idiom. Apart from these exceptions, Meek strongly urges a literal translation.

<sup>6</sup> *NEB*, p. ix.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

guity into English and leave the reader to make the interpretation in the light of the context.<sup>8</sup>

1 Thessalonians was chosen as the basis of the detailed examination because its length lent itself to this type of a study, and because it is fairly free from controversial passages where it is all too easy for discussion to become emotionally charged. It thus offers the opportunity for a calm appraisal of the *NEB* as a translation. In examining this section of the New Testament an endeavor has been made to discover characteristics (both good and bad) of the translation which might apply not only to this epistle, but also to the remainder of the work.

### *Weakening the Greek*

Early reviewers of the *NEB* noticed that it failed at many points to catch the vigor and vividness of the Greek. The directness and strength of the original had been smoothed over to such an extent that the natural forcefulness of the language did not show through.<sup>9</sup> It was also noticed that this tendency in translation seemed to be "a policy-decision."<sup>10</sup> This has been confirmed by a detailed study of 1 Thessalonians. If this epistle is any criterion, the translators have considerably weakened many words and constructions in the process of translation. This has had the effect of removing from the epistle the personal style of Paul and substituting a contemporary style. As a result it becomes less the Epistle of Paul and more that of some nameless and faceless author. The personal relations which Paul had with the church at

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that in their *Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (Leiden, 1961), pp. 63, 69, Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene A. Nida have suggested that Bible translators retain the ambiguity of the Greek when translating into modern languages.

<sup>9</sup> See the following: Frederick C. Grant, *Review of The New English Bible: New Testament*, *JBL*, LXXX (1961), 173, and J. Carter Swaim, "The Newest New Testament", *CC*, LXXVIII (1961), 324.

<sup>10</sup> E. J. Stormon, "Synoptic Gospels in the *NEB*," *Australian Biblical Review*, IX (1961), 6.

Thessalonica are de-emphasized and the letter becomes a piece of religious writing for the twentieth century. This apparently is the goal of the translators, but the way in which the forceful style of Paul is eliminated from the epistle is certainly to be deprecated. The following verses are illustrative of this feature of the translation.

2: 4 "But God has approved us as fit to be entrusted with the Gospel and on those terms we speak." The force of the correlation καθὼς . . . οὕτως is not adequately represented by the English. Approval by God is an important aspect of Paul's thinking (e.g., Gal 1: 10, 11). He felt that he could only speak to the Thessalonians if he had this approval. It constituted his credentials. In the previous verse he expresses the fact that his appeal to the Thessalonians did not come from error or impure motives or deceit, but, on the contrary (ἀλλὰ), to the extent that he had the approval of God, to that extent he could speak for God. The *NEB* loses the adversative force of this verse. There is also an unnecessary change of δεδοκιμάσμεθα from passive to active. This weakens the expression. By using the passive verb with the agent Paul has managed to emphasize the fact that his approval came from God. The phrase "on those terms" would be better rendered "by this authority."

2: 14 "You have fared like the congregations in Judea." This is a very much weaker and less direct statement than the more literal "You have become imitators of the churches . . ." It makes the Thessalonians passive recipients rather than active participants. It also destroys the force of the connection with μιμηταὶ in 1:6, of which this verse is an amplification.<sup>11</sup>

"You have been treated." Again there is to be seen a weakening of the Greek. ἐπάθετε speaks of physical persecution suffered and of times of great distress. This bond of suffering

<sup>11</sup> James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* ("Int. Crit. Comm." Edinburgh, 1912), p. 108.

was the uniting link between the church in Thessalonica and the church in Judea.

2: 17 "We were exceedingly anxious to see you again." The *Revised Standard Version* (= RSV) renders this clause as follows: "We endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face." The *NEB* is totally inadequate here as a rendering of the Greek. The degree of emotion in Paul's words, as illustrated by the comparative adverb *περισσοτέρως*, the verb *ἐσπουδάσαμεν* and the phrase *ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ*, is certainly not well represented by the words "exceedingly anxious."<sup>12</sup> The RSV translation may be less smooth but it is more accurate. Rutherford has translated, "anxious out of measure to see your face with passionate desire."<sup>13</sup>

3: 3 "Under all these hardships." *θλίψεσιν* designates something stronger than mere hardship. It is oppression, affliction or tribulation.<sup>14</sup> Hardship may mean only straitened circumstances, but *θλίψις* involves persecution, real physical pain. Says Morris, "It is not mild discomfort, but a great and sore difficulty."<sup>15</sup> The *NEB* also translates this way at 3: 4, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* ("New Internat. Comm.;" Grand Rapids, Mich., 1959), pp. 93, 94, has emphasized the meaning of this clause. "We have no precise equivalent of the Greek word rendered 'endeavored,' a word which manages to combine the two ideas of haste and earnestness. It means that Paul did not delay, not did he put forth a token effort only. . . . He reinforces this strong verb with a comparative adverb, 'the more exceedingly' which should leave them in no doubt as to the strength of his endeavors. But he is not finished yet. He tells them that he had endeavored to see them 'with great desire' . . . Here Paul uses it [*ἐπιθυμία*] in its original sense of a very strong desire, almost a fierce passion. He wants his friends to be in no doubt as to the strength of his feelings for them."

<sup>13</sup> W. G. Rutherford, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians and Corinthians: A New Translation* (London, 1908).

<sup>14</sup> W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, 1957), p. 362.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 59.

“For you know.” The emphatic use of *αὐτοί* is treated variously in 1 Thessalonians. It has been acknowledged in 1: 9, 2: 1 and 4: 9 but has been ignored in 2: 14 and 5: 2 in addition to this verse.

3: 10 “Most earnestly.” *ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ* is a difficult word to translate into English because Paul is straining the language to express the ardor of his feelings. The *KJV* (“beyond measure exceedingly”) accurately portrays the Greek word while it fails as English expression. The *NEB* is satisfactory as English but fails to catch the strength of this complex adverb. It might be better to express it as a noun, “with very great earnestness.”

4: 5 “not giving way to lust.” The phrase *μη ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας* is more precise and more emphatic than the translation would lead us to believe. It is literally translated, “not in the passion of lust.” *ἐπιθυμίας* is probably a qualitative genitive and thus the meaning would be “a passion which has the quality of lust.” *πάθος* represents the passive side of the concept and *ἐπιθυμία* the active side.<sup>16</sup>

4: 6 “As we told you before will all emphasis.” While the translation “to tell with all emphasis” is undoubtedly emphatic, it nevertheless misses the true force of *διεμαρτυράμεθα* which is “to testify (of) or bear witness (to) solemnly (originally under oath).”<sup>17</sup> In this word is seen the court of law and the solemn testimony given under oath. Paul thus gives great strength to his statement by saying that it was given, as it were, under oath. This force is lost in the translation.

“The Lord punishes all such offences.” The predicate (*ἔκδικος*) is placed forward for emphasis and the sense of the sentence is “an avenger is the Lord in all these things.” God is spoken of as being an avenger because the sins described represent a personal offence to Him. The *NEB* appears

<sup>16</sup> R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1948), p. 324.

<sup>17</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

deliberately to have avoided the use of this word because of its bad connotation to the modern ear. However, it must be recognized by the translator, as indeed it was by Paul, that this is a biblical concept.<sup>18</sup> The translation given by the *NEB* thus removes much of the strength of Paul's statement.

4: 8 The translators have ignored the strength of the inferential particle *τοιγαροῦν* in this verse. It draws a sharp inference from *vv* 3-7 and its force should not be overlooked. It is used in the New Testament only here and in Heb 12: 1 where the *NEB* translates it with emphasis. It is stronger than *διὰ τοῦτο* (2: 13); *διό* (3: 1) or *ὥστε* (4: 18), but, like these, introduces a logical conclusion from a preceding discussion. It should be translated, "for that very reason then."

4: 10 "Yet we appeal to you." *παρακαλέω* and *παρακλήσις* occur a total of nine times in 1 Thessalonians.<sup>19</sup> The *NEB* translates these by the following: appeal (three times), encourage, reassure, pray, console, hearten, urge. In the sense in which it is most commonly used this word appears to have three levels of meaning: (1) to appeal, (2) to encourage or urge and (3) to exhort, the last of which is the strongest of the three. In 1 Thessalonians, the *NEB* translates by (1) and (2), but never by (3), and yet the context of each use (except 3: 2, 7 and possibly 4: 1) demands that the stronger term be used. The nature of Paul's contacts with his churches in general and with the Thessalonian church in particular, suggests that in this type of context, it is exhortation, not appeal or encouragement that he is offering. The translation of *παρακαλέω* is taken as another evidence of the weakening of many of the expressions in the *NEB* translation of 1 Thessalonians.

4: 15 "Shall not forestall." The emphatic double negative *οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν* is ignored in this translation. It is also ignored at 5: 3.

5: 4 "But you, . . . are not in the dark." The emphatic *ὑμεῖς* is ignored here as also at 2: 14 (*bis*); 3: 8; 5: 5. Likewise,

<sup>18</sup> For example, Dt 32: 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ch 2: 3, 11; 3: 2, 7; 4: 1, 10, 18; 5: 11, 14.

the emphatic use of ἡμεῖς is ignored at 2: 13, 17; 4: 15, 17; 5: 8.

5: 12 "Are your leaders and counselors." νουθετοῦντας is stronger than counseling. It implies warning or admonishing as at 5: 14 where the *NEB* translates it as "to admonish." "νουθετεῖν denotes brotherly warning or admonition as 2 Thess 3: 15 makes plain."<sup>20</sup>

5: 14 "You must live at peace among yourselves." It might be disagreed that the change from the imperative (ἐιρηνεύετε) to the obligatory ("you must . . .") weakens the force of Paul's words. However, it is certainly less direct and to that extent does detract from the strength of his expression. There is good reason for translating the verb as an imperative. In the context Paul is giving a series of admonitions in the form of imperatives, and it seems logical to retain each of these imperatives in the translation.

### *Impersonalization*

The translators of the *NEB* have tended to make impersonal Paul's contacts with the Thessalonian church. This seems to minimize the personal nature of the epistle and thus lose something which is important to an understanding of all of Paul's epistles, *viz.*, his personal relations with each of the churches concerned. Such a loss impairs our understanding of the letter as a whole. This tendency may be seen as a further way in which the *NEB* has weakened the force of the Greek. The following examples illustrate this feature of the translation.

1: 5 "At Thessalonica." By using the proper noun and avoiding the use of the personal pronoun (ὑμῖν), Paul's statement has been impersonalized. The change from second person to third person has the effect of making this aspect of the letter less personal and the first century atmosphere of the letter is lessened. This same tendency is to be seen at 1: 8 and 3: 16 where ἀφ' ὑμῶν is translated "from Thessalonica" and

<sup>20</sup> Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

at 2: 18 where πρὸς ὑμᾶς is translated "to Thessalonica."

2: 9 "Rather than be a burden to anyone." By omitting the second person pronoun (ὑμῶν) after "anyone," the translation has again de-emphasized the personal relations between Paul and the church.

2: 19 "For after all, what hope . . . is there for us, what indeed but you." The emphasis in this translation lies on "hope," "joy" and "crown" rather than on the Thessalonians themselves, where Paul intended it. Paul's use of the masculine interrogative τίς and his question ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς indicate that the verse should be translated "Who is our hope . . . Is it not even you."

3: 2 "To encourage you to stand firm for the faith." The presence of ὑμῶν after πίστεως is evidence that it is not "the faith" or faith in general, but the faith of the Thessalonians, their personal faith, with which Paul is concerned. The *RSV* translates, "to establish you in your faith and to exhort you."

3: 3 "Not to be shaken." The *NEB* has again chosen the impersonal translation and has ignored μηδένα. It would be better translated "that no one be shaken."

3: 6 "Arrived." This is the translation for ἐλθόντος . . . πρὸς ἡμᾶς. Although this is possible as a translation, it does not satisfactorily represent the personal contact that was made when Timothy came to Paul from the Thessalonians.

3: 8 "It is the breath of life to us that you stand firm." The omission of the adverb νῦν veils the fact that this knowledge had come to Paul just before he wrote. This removes something of the vividness from the situation being described.

These illustrations are sufficient to demonstrate that in 1 Thessalonians the *NEB* tends to de-emphasize the personal nature of Paul's contacts with the church. Another example of the same tendency is seen in their translation of ἀδελφός when it occurs in the vocative case. This is, of course, one of Paul's favorite expressions and he appears to use it with

deliberation.<sup>21</sup> It occurs seventeen times in 1 Thessalonians of which nine are translated "brothers" (why not "brethren"?), four are translated "my friends," two are omitted, one is translated "brotherhood" and one "fellow Christians." Paul's concept of Christian brotherhood is diminished in some of these renderings.

### *Unjustified Paraphrasing*

One of the criticisms which has been leveled at the *NEB* has been the degree to which it has left the field of translator and entered the field of commentator.<sup>22</sup> The results of this examination of 1 Thessalonians tend to confirm this criticism. There are many places at which the translators have paraphrased unnecessarily. In such places a literal translation of the Greek would have provided a satisfactory result. There are other places where the paraphrase has introduced new thoughts not resident in the original, and in some cases, out of harmony with the context. The following will serve to illustrate this aspect of the translation.

1: 5 "That when we brought you the Gospel, we brought it not." ὅτι should be translated "because" as in the *NEB* footnote, not "that." The clause gives the reason for Paul's certainty of the Thessalonians' election. Nothing is gained by the periphrasis "when we brought you the Gospel, we brought it," and indeed it detracts from the real emphasis of the verse. The emphasis of the verse lies on the message (*cf.* ἐν λόγῳ μόνον) and not on the bearers of the message.<sup>23</sup> The *NEB* has wrongly placed the emphasis.

3: 8 "It is the breath of life to us." This is a rather clumsy paraphrase and also a verbose one. It requires eight words for the two Greek words νῦν ζῶμεν. This rather tends to bear out Swaim's estimate that the *NEB* used four per cent more

<sup>21</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* ("Tyndale N.T. Commentaries"; Grand Rapids, Mich., 1960), p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> B. M. Metzger, "How Good is the New English Bible?" *Eternity*, XII (1961), 44.

<sup>23</sup> Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

words than the *RSV*.<sup>24</sup> A paraphrase is probably permissible here but a preferred translation would have been "now we abound."

3: 13 "May he make your hearts firm, so that you may stand . . . holy and faultless." This translation denies a close connection with what precedes and presupposes another optative of wish in a loose relationship with the three optatives (*κατευθύναι, πλεονάσαι, περισσεύσαι*) which precede. It ignores the fact that *εἰς τὸ στηριξάι* is an articular infinitive expressing purpose. It also inserts another clause "so that you may stand." The resultant paraphrase has completely changed the meaning of this part of the verse.

"With all those who are his own." The Greek uses *τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ*. Despite their attempts to be unambiguous in their translation this is one place where the translators have very adroitly avoided the question raised by commentators as to whether *ἁγίων* refers to saints or angels. However, their solution is not satisfactory because it introduces a thought which is not directly relevant. It would have been better in this case to translate by the literal "holy ones."

4: 1 "We passed on to you the tradition of the way we must live." *παρελάβετε* ("you received from us") has been changed unnecessarily to "we passed on to you." The subject of the succeeding verbs (*περισσεύετε* and *οἴδατε*) is second person plural (and the *NEB* so translates them). Thus Paul's emphasis here is on the Thessalonians who received and not on himself and his associates who gave. The paraphrase introduced by the translators is thus quite unjustified. "Tradition" is both unnecessary and misleading. Had the verb used been *παραδίδωμι* there might have been some justification for the inclusion of this word.

5: 15 "Always aim at doing the best you can." This is a careless paraphrase. *τὸ ἀγαθὸν* is opposed to *κακόν* and in this context refers to the good thing which, in Paul's mind, is

<sup>24</sup> Swaim, *loc. cit.*

probably love. "It is difficult to avoid the conviction that τὸ ἀγαθὸν, the moral ideal . . . is for Paul love . . ." <sup>25</sup>

5: 26 "With the kiss of peace." Literally, this is "with a holy kiss." The inclusion of the idea of peace is interpretation.

There are a number of unnecessary insertions in the translation of 1 Thessalonians. In the following examples the words italicized are not to be found in the Greek. "To wait expectantly for *the appearance* from heaven of his son *Jesus*" (1: 10); "in *the service* of the gospel of Christ" (3: 2); "night and day *to be allowed* to see you" (3: 10); "about those who sleep in *death*" (4: 13); "and rose *again*" (4: 14); "will bring them *to life* with Jesus" (4: 14).

### *Archaisms and Colloquialisms*

The major objective placed before the translators of the *NEB* was to produce a translation which made consistent use of English idiom of the present day. "We have sought to avoid archaism, jargon, and all that is either stilted or slipshod."<sup>26</sup> However, it is well recognized that this goal was interpreted by the translators in terms of contemporary British idiom. This is seen in the retention of words and expressions which might be considered archaic in non-British, English-speaking countries, but which are still in use in England. This, of course, limits to some extent the usefulness of the translation. However, having made allowance for British idiom, there are still parts of the translation which must be labeled archaic. At the other extreme there are translations which are colloquial. In between these there are some translations which are stilted. The following are examples of archaisms, awkward translations and colloquial translations.

"Fortitude" (1: 3) is a rather Victorian word and it may be seriously questioned whether it is used commonly today even

<sup>25</sup> Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

<sup>26</sup> *NEB*, p. x.

in England. It is also an inaccurate translation for ὑπομονῆς which denotes steadfastness or patient endurance. "We might have made our weight felt" (2: 6) is a good example of the colloquial nature of some of the translations. "For a short spell" (2: 17) is a British colloquial expression. "And so it has turned out" (3: 4) is a good translation of καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο but it, too, is colloquial. "And so it has happened" would have expressed the same idea and retained the dignity of good expression. "Bring us direct to you" (3: 11) is not good contemporary English. A better translation would have been "guide us to you." "May he make your hearts firm" (3: 13) is certainly unusual, if not archaic.

"We want you not to remain in ignorance" (4: 13) is stilted English as also is "He died for us so that we, awake or asleep, might live" (5: 10). "In the Lord's fellowship" (5: 12) is awkward English. "For this is what God . . . wills for you" (5: 18) is rather stilted. "Avoid the bad of whatever kind" is both awkward English and vague in meaning. A better translation is "avoid every form of evil." ὁλοτελεῖς is translated "in every part" (5: 23) probably to avoid the translation "wholly holy." The solution reached by the *RSV* ("sanctify you wholly") is more satisfactory.

### *Improved Translations*

It would be remiss to conclude this study without pointing out some of the admirable features of the *NEB*. Because the Committee have allowed themselves some freedom, they have been able to produce some vivid and fresh translations. Perhaps their major contribution to the Bible translation scene will lie in this area. However, apart from such paraphrases, there are many excellent renderings which represent improvements on the work of earlier translations. Some of these will be noted briefly.

In 1: 10, the translators have combined very well the two elements of ἀναμένειν. Both the *KJV* and the *RSV* have

translated "to wait." "To wait expectantly" is far more satisfactory from all points of view. It is rather significant that, at 2: 4, the *NEB* has emphasized the linear force of the participle δοκιμάζοντι by translating "who is continually testing." It is not possible, except in translations of the "expanded" or "amplified" type, to show consistently the force of the different tenses, but it is essential at some places for this force to be made clear in translation. In this particular context it adds to the meaning of the passage to emphasize the durative nature of the participle. An example of the conversion of nouns into verbs, to good effect, is given at 2: 9. τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον is translated "how we toiled and drudged." The translation of κόπον and μόχθον as verbs has served to place more emphasis on the action of Paul's work for the Thessalonians. This point is well made.

At 2: 18, translators have been at a loss to provide a suitable translation for ἠθελήσαμεν ἐλθεῖν. They have either been too vague (*e.g.* "we would have come" *KJV*) or too weak (*e.g.* "we wanted to come" *RSV*). The *NEB* appears to have made a happy choice in "we proposed to come." In this same verse, it gives a smoother rendering of ἄπαξ καὶ δὶς ("more than once") than the traditional "again and again." At 3: 5, the translators have pointed out the ingressive force of the aorist infinitive γινῶναι ("to find out"). At 4: 3, they have caught the true nature of the action suffix and have translated ὁ ἀγιασμός "that you should be holy."

The places where the *NEB* is briefer than either the *KJV* or the *RSV* are rare but one such place is 4: 15, where a good result is achieved by this brevity. At this place ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι is very sensibly translated "we who are left alive." Finally at 5: 8, a vivid translation is made from the rather prosaic ἐνδυσάμενοι. The figure of the immediate context, which speaks of "breastplate" and "helmet" is endorsed by the translation "armed with."