

2 Corinthians 4:14 in the Navajo Bible

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Háálá Diyin God éí Bóhólníhii Jesus néidiisáhígú t'áá éí ałdó' **baa hoolzhiizhdi** Jesus **yee** náánihididoołjah, áádóó t'áá ła' bizhi'ee t'áá hó hojílóodi nánihizhdoo'ishgo nihił bééhózin. (2 Corinthians 4:14) ¹

because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us **with** Jesus and present us with you in his presence. (2 Corinthians 4:14) ²

Introduction

In 2 Corinthians 4:14 there is an issue involving the Greek text on which the Navajo and NIV take different positions. There is also an addition to the text that the Navajo makes merely for purposes of clarity. We'll deal with the addition first.

The Addition

In the Navajo translation of 2 Corinthians 4:14 the words *baa hoolzhiizhdi* ("when the time comes") are added, but the sense is correct. Jesus "will also raise us [when the time comes]." That time will come when Jesus returns in glory. There is no doctrinal problem here. I merely point out that the words *baa hoolzhiizhdi* are added.

The Textual Issue

Some Greek manuscripts say we will be raised "through Jesus," i.e., He is the One God uses to raise us. Other Greek manuscripts say we will be raised "with Jesus," i.e., in the same way that Jesus was raised. *Diyin God Bizaad* says "through" (or "by," Navajo *yee*). NIV, on the other hand, says "with." This is a very old difference going back to the earliest witnesses of the Greek text that we have available. The King James Version (KJV) says "by" (Greek *dia*, "through"). Most other English translations say "with" (Greek *sun*, "with").

The meaning of "with"

The meaning when we translate "through" (or "by") is entirely straightforward. Jesus is the One God uses to raise those who love Him. The meaning when we translate using the word "with" requires more explanation. Our eventual resurrection (which is future) does not happen at

¹ Navajo Bible quotations are from *Diyin God Bizaad. The Holy Bible in Navajo*. Revised edition. New York: American Bible Society, 2000.

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the same time as Jesus' resurrection (which is past). Our resurrection takes place here, His took place there. So if the two events do not take place together – in either time or space – what meaning could "with" possibly have?

The answer is that it could mean "like." The two resurrections (His and ours) do not happen at the same time, and very probably they won't happen in the same place, but they do happen in the same way. When Jesus came from the tomb, He had a physical body. That physical body was glorified, I grant, but it was a real body nonetheless. And when we are raised to life again at the last day, we also will have real, physical bodies. On one occasion, when Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He said:

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." (Luke 24:39)

When God raises us, we will not be ghosts. We will be real people. Our bodies will be just as real as Jesus' glorified body. We will be raised "with" Him, i.e., "like" Him – in the same way and with the same results. As He was raised, so we will be raised.

A parallel passage

The word "with" has some interesting meanings. Consider the story of Adam and Eve when Eve ate the fruit God told her not to eat.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, **who was with her**, and he ate it. (Genesis 3:6, NIV)

When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6, TNK)

NIV translates the Hebrew word *šimmâ* as "who was with her." They could have just said "with her." That's the literal meaning of the word *šim* ("with"). But TNK – a very fine Jewish translation of the Old Testament – leaves the word untranslated. Why? Not because they're ignoring it, but because they understood it to mean something other than "with." They take the meaning to be, not "with her," but "like her." Just as Eve had received the fruit from the serpent, "She also gave some to her husband, and he ate" (TNK). For some other examples, see the appendix (below).

Conclusion

Both the Navajo translation and NIV have reasons they can point to for the textual choices they make. Actually, a majority of both English translations and early Greek manuscripts say "with" in this passage. So the Navajo represents a minority opinion by translating as it does. And yet the meaning is completely correct. Whether we are raised "with" Jesus (i.e., "like" Him) or "through" Jesus (i.e., "by" Him), the results are all the same. In either case He is the One who deserves the glory and praise.

Appendix

Old Testament examples

Náánáła' diné bich'í' nidahwii'nánigi **át'éego** [*w^eim*] bí doo ákót'éego cich'í' nidahwii'náa da; náánáła' diné bide ándahoot'íihígi **át'éego** bí doo ákót'éego bide ándahoot'íih da. (Psalm 73:5)

They are free from the burdens **common to** [*w^eim*] man; they are not plagued by human ills. (Psalm 73:5)

Danihizhé'é yéegi **át'éego** [*im*] nihí ałdó' ádił nida'ayeelzí'. Doo ákóó ádeiit'íid da. Doo yá'áshónígi ádeiit'íid. (Psalm 106:6)

We have sinned, **even as** [*im*] our fathers did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly. (Psalm 106:6)

Háálá doo áhályáanii doo bééhodoonih daigi **át'éego** [*im*] diné hóyáanii ałdó' hool'áágóo doo bééhodoonih da; jó, yookkáálgóo háadida t'óo baa dahoyoos'nahii ádaat'ée dooleel. Dooládó' diné hóyáanii áádóo diné doo áhályáanii **t'áá aheelt'éego** [*im*] nine da lá! (Ecclesiastes 2:16)

For the wise man, **like** [*im*] the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. **Like** [*im*] the fool, the wise man too must die! (Ecclesiastes 2:16)

New Testament example

Peter looked straight at him, as did [*sun*] John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" (Acts 3:4)

Áko Peter **áádóo** [*sun*] John yéego honí'íigo áhální, Nihiníní'í. (Acts 3:4)

Discussion

Notice that the Navajo translates Hebrew *im* ("with") as *-gi át'éego* ("like that") in all three Old Testament passages (Psalm 73:5; 106:6; Ecclesiastes 2:16). Actually Ecclesiastes 2:16 has two examples of the Hebrew word *im* ("with"). In the second example the Navajo translators have *t'áá aheelt'éego* ("in the same way").

In Acts 3:4 Greek *sun* (corresponding to Hebrew *im*) means something like "and." Thus, the Navajo has *áádóo* ("and"). Thus, whatever way Peter looked at the crippled man, John also looked at him the same way.