

Revelation 9:11 in the Navajo Bible

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A'áán doo nihoodzááddéé' diyingo naal'a'í éí nahachagíitsoh aláahgo yinanit'a'í nilí. Éí Hííbrew k'ehjí Abáadan wolyé, Gríik k'ehjí Apáliyan wolyé. (Revelation 9:11)¹

They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon. (Revelation 9:11)²

Discussion

In the Navajo text of Revelation 9:11 the reference back to the locusts of vss. 3 and 7 is accomplished by repeating the word "locust" (*nahachagíitsoh*). Superficially this comes across as an addition to the text, but it isn't. It's just a strengthening of the pronoun "They" which begins the verse in English. Here are all three verses which refer to locusts – the last in my own gloss based on the Navajo translation.

And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. (Revelation 9:3)

The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. (Revelation 9:7)

The angel from the bottomless pit is the one who rules the locusts. In Hebrew he is called Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon. (Revelation 9:11, my gloss based on the Navajo)

After introducing the locusts in vs. 3 they are referred to with a pronoun in vss. 4 and 5. After repeating the term "locusts" in vs. 7 they are again referred to with a pronoun in vss. 8, 9, and 10. In English this series of pronoun references continues in vs. 11, but the Navajo translators wanted to make sure the point was not being missed, so in vs. 11 they repeat the word *nahachagíitsoh*.

Revelation is a challenging book, but the Navajo translators have done their work well. It's amazing to see how they have been able to make the language feel at home in and around this very difficult material.

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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