

Highlights of the Beginner Greek Class Written Report

During this semester of the Sweet Savor Bible School, students in the Beginner Greek Class were introduced to the basics of the Greek language as well as to a variety of resources that can be used to explain, analyze, and study the Greek Bible. The class began with a basic introduction to the characters of the Greek alphabet and practice pronouncing Greek words. Familiarity with the language was fostered with weekly practice that consisted of reading short verses aloud and copying the text of the verses by hand in Greek and in English. Weekly Youtube videos were assigned that covered topics relating to Greek grammar to fill in students' knowledge of Greek nouns, syntax, verb tenses, prepositions, etc.

Three types of assignments were given out to students to familiarize them with the Greek study resources: Word studies; verse studies; and paraphrasing assignments. The resources that were introduced to students include the website BibleHub (especially the interlinear Greek, Thayer's definitions, and the Commentary sections), other Greek Lexicons (e.g. Louw and Nida), and the Theological Dictionary of the NT. Many students decided to work in groups to discuss and reflect on the weekly assignments together. All the assignments required students to produce 1-2 page papers summarizing what they learned.

Word studies required students to not only look up and summarize the basic and semantic meanings, but also look into the historical context and reflect on the spiritual significance of key Greek words. One example of a word study was focused on "koinonia", a word that appears prominently in the first letter of John and generally translates as "fellowship". By reading through different reference materials, looking up verses that featured "koinonia", and reflecting on personal experiences, students were able to gain a deeper understanding into the meaning of this word and what it brings to our relationship with God and with the church. Students were also able to learn from each other through discussion during the live class session as well as through reading others' assignments.

Verse studies had students focus in on certain verses or short phrases and reading up on the related commentaries found on BibleHub (e.g. Cambridge Bible study, VWS, Darby etc.). The first verse study that students worked on challenged students to study the phrase "Word of Life" in the context of 1 John 1:1 and summarize their learnings. In completing this assignment, students became aware of the grammatical nuances in the phrase (i.e. genitive in apposition), learned about the debate among scholars concerning whether "Word" referred to the personal Word, Christ, or to the doctrine/gospel, and were able to reflect on the layers of meaning that can be found within John's usage of the phrase in his writings.

Verse paraphrasing assignments required students to attempt a translation of a verse in their own words based on their study of the grammar and semantics of the original Greek text. References such as the Amplified Bible and the Wuest Expanded Translation were used to give students an idea of how different translations attempted to express the meaning of the original Greek. When students were asked to paraphrase 1 John 1:1-2, they were able to apply what they learned in previous assignments to

help them express the meaning of the verses based on their understanding. Many creative and interesting paraphrases were done by students and the process was very educational, encouraging students to reflect on the meaning of keywords such as “beginning” and analyze the difference between different verb tenses used such as Aorist and Perfect.