

**Seeing with your own eyes!**  
**The Crucial Study of Greek for Christian Preachers/Pastors!**  
**Some Reflections!**

The study of language was crucial to the Protestant Reformation. Scholars at this time realised, that without a knowledge of the original languages, there could be no true confidence in the message proclaimed by the Church. The Protestant Reformation revitalized interest and inquiry into the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old and New Testaments. The first translation of the New Testament in Greek was produced by Erasmus in 1516.

Of this revival in scholarship Erasmus said,

“I have learned this by experience, that without Greek one can do nothing in any branch of study; for it is one thing to conjecture, and quite another thing to judge – one thing to see with other people’s eyes, and quite another thing to believe what you see with your own.”

Erasmus was pointing out the vital importance of knowing and understanding the Greek of the New Testament for yourself! Without such a knowledge of the original Greek, a man may ‘conjecture’ from what others may say about the original text, but it was impossible for him to make a ‘judgement’ himself. His lack of knowledge of the Greek language rendered him incapable of ‘seeing’ what the text said with ‘his own eyes’!

Many men who have pursued academic training for the Christian ministry, and begun the study of the original languages have neglected to pursue that study. I spoke with a young man recently who told me that the tyranny of time and the tasks demanded of him by people in the church, had caused him neglect his own personal study of the Greek New Testament. I urged him to consider:

- English translations cannot supply all the nuances of the original Greek language. To be able to read Greek is to have your mind opened to the explosive meaning within the words of the original Greek text.
- Begin reading Greek grammars as a way of slowly building your understanding of the way in which the language works. There are so many new Greek grammars on the market. One may suit better than another, but different grammars can shed new light in your darkness!
- Begin reading a small section of the Greek New Testament each day – a few verses each day. Keep it up!
- Don’t be impatient; your fluency in translation and your vocabulary and grammar will increase incrementally. Remember, ‘time’ is on your side; you were given the privilege of taking time to study the New Testament so that you can teach it accurately to the Church. Your Ordination charged you with this responsibility! Many clergy have

begun to question their role in the church. There is a crisis of confidence! Some clergy have told me that their laity can preach better than them. I don't believe they can if you think of what the New Testament says in 1 Tim 4:11-16; and think about it in the Greek!

□ Remember that the pursuing of your Greek is a daily, life long experience, in the exciting world of the original words of the New Testament; it is a glorious adventure into the world of words and grammar that will never cease to satisfy, enriching you and your hearers in understanding of the world of the New Testament. "Its Still Greek to Me" is the title of a book on Greek grammar by Prof David Black. By employing such a title he is indicating that the world of Greek is an ever expanding vista.

**We may never explore the full depths, but it is crucial that we start, and stay with the journey .. seeing with our own eyes!**

Pastor J Lowe