

12.5.2013 | Class 26 Week 14

- Text reconstruction: Robert Alter on parallel clauses in the KJV
- Conferences on Practice Exit Exam

ANSWER

Text reconstruction

INSTRUCTIONS: INSTRUCTIONS: Number the sentences in the order you believe they appear in the original, a paragraph by Robert Alter on the subject of parallel clauses in the King James Version. Then transcribe the paragraph on the lines below.

- _____4_____ The translators convened by King James strove for a literal representation of the Hebrew text and generally reproduced its sequence of parallel clauses linked by "and."
- _____9_____ He assembled all of his family, "[a]nd he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over all he had. And Jacob was left alone, and there he wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."
- _____3_____ But the KJV opened certain new possibilities for English prose that are still very relevant.
- _____2_____ The KJV turns 400 this year, and we have long since abandoned "thou" and "thee."
- _____8_____ Here is how the KJV renders the beginning of Jacob's nocturnal encounter with the angel.
- _____6_____ The KJV's method of organizing language has proved to be a subtle literary instrument, compelling readers to work out the precise connections between successive statements without the aid of subordinate conjunctions and qualifying syntax.
- _____1_____ At first blush, the idea that a writer in the 21st century might learn something about English style from the King James Version of the Bible would seem like a nonstarter. [snip]
- _____5_____ This is not a natural way to write English prose, which provides many devices ("after," "if," "whose," etc.) for creating subordinate clauses.
- _____7_____ Ernest Hemingway, Saul Bellow and other American writers clearly grasped the advantages of this approach.

Adapted from:

The Good Book's Great Prose Lessons by Robert Alter – *Wall Street Journal* – March 5, 2011
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704444604576172883432392302.html>

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Here is how the KJV renders the beginning of Jacob's nocturnal encounter with the angel. He assembled all of his family, "[a]nd he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over all he had. And Jacob was left alone, and there he wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

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