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<http://talkingwithgod.net>

How Errors in Biblical Translation Led to the Worship of a Communications System

“So ingrained in Jewish and Christian thought are the translations ‘sanctify’ and ‘holy’ that they have literally shaped these religions. They have taken on rather mystical meanings of sacredness and reverence for God, but they were never meant to signify these concepts. These terms have everything to do with talking with God.” Roger D. Isaacs, *Talking With God*

Imagine: a major telecommunications company hires a professional technician to service a network of cell phone towers. He will build and repair the towers, install antennas, conduct tests, and read blueprints. He understands the safety rules and regulations of the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA), which are designed to protect workers and the public from microwave radiation emitted from radios, cellular phones, communications transmitters, and radar transmitters. [<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/radiofrequencyradiation/>]

Now fast forward to a time in the distant future, when the earth has changed so dramatically that we would scarcely recognize it. Twenty-first century technology has become the stuff of myth and legend. With the superstitions and fears humans have always held, they place relics of cell phones upon the altars of the temples. Stained glass masterpieces feature images from scorched and faded blueprints. Antenna sculptures stand high atop the temple rooftops, a fixture of the era’s sacred architecture.

Operations manuals written by the technical scribes of the past are translated into many languages and studied by religious scholars for their mystical revelations. Just what the scriptures say about existence and the immortality of the soul is hotly debated. Something about “downloading wisdom from the heavens,” although “wisdom” could also mean “data stream” (Olt Verizon). Meanwhile, during holy day services, cell phone commercials are sung joyfully by choirs across the land. Dressed in the jumpsuits, miters, vision goggles, and boots of the 21st century technician-prophet-priests are anointed by God to teach from the sacred Operations Manual and



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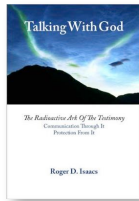
to conduct rituals to honor and perhaps awaken (or “activate,” Olt Sprinnt) the ancient communications system.

The Ark of the Testimony

The cell phone as holy icon? How could a machine come to be viewed as sacred over time? Roger D. Isaacs asks this same question in *Talking With God*. That is, how did the Ark of the Testimony (a.k.a. Ark of the Covenant)—*a communications device*—come to be perceived by both ancient and modern peoples as holy and mystical? For Isaacs, the answer to the mystery lies in etymology, the study of the origin or derivation of words. Through his extensive research in museums and libraries, and in digs in several countries, including Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and Israel, Isaacs compared related words and loanwords in other languages that, when associated with their Hebrew neighbors and considered together, help to clarify the intent of the early biblical scribes.

According to Isaacs, the Bible explains the Ark was a communications system designed by the Lord to talk with the Israelites. From time to time a cloud settled on the Ark, and it was through a substance in the cloud that sound waves were transmitted and the Lord’s voice was heard. The cloud, which emitted radiation, was inherently dangerous to the untrained masses; thus, the procedures, safety regulations, facilities, and protective uniforms of the priests were all designed to protect them and the people from danger. Only the priests were trained to operate the Ark safely, and thus only the trained priests knew how to communicate safely with God, who spoke through the cloud.

The Torah, the first five books of the Bible, contains most of what we know about the Ark as a communications system, including its technical jargon, procedures, and safety precautions. The Ark was in use from the time of Moses to the reign of King David.



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While the Ark was in use, the Israelites were terrified of its power. They used the common terms of the day to describe the dangers, injuries, and even fatalities caused by inappropriate handling of the Ark.

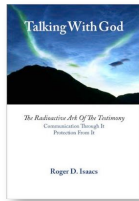
After King David died, the Ark was passed on to his son, King Solomon. Based on his etymological investigations, Isaacs believes that the Ark no longer worked as it did in the past. There is no indication that the Ark was used as a communications device again, and the language describing it completely changed from technical jargon to mystical interpretations.

In his book *Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible*, Arthur C. Clarke wrote, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." From the operations manual in the Torah to the mystical descriptions thereafter, the Ark and its related phenomena were recorded and later translated by peoples who did the best they could, within the context of their religious cultural frameworks, to grapple with an advanced technology that was light years beyond their ability to understand.

Common mistranslations of Ark technical jargon

Misunderstandings of the original purpose of the Ark of the Testimony that began in King Solomon's time might have continued unabated to this day had it not been for Isaacs' etymological investigation. Stripping key words of their mystical interpretations presents a radically different picture of what the Israelites had in their midst. Isaacs explores several commonly mistranslated, misunderstood words in *Talking With God*, but here we will look at two: "glory" and "clean/unclean."

Glorify vs. Radiance. The Hebrew words *kawbode*, which describes the substance in the cloud that settled on the Ark, has been traditionally, and mistakenly, translated as "glory" or "honor." The original word indicates "radiance." It is directly related to the word *kawbade*, which means "thick, dense." This makes sense when we begin to understand that the cloud was a natural physical substance that glowed/radiated at night. The related Ugaritic word *kab tu* translates as



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heavy, dense, dangerous, wound, and illness, covering all the aspects of the cloud, including its danger.

Clean and Unclean. The Hebrew word *tawhor* is traditionally translated as “clean,” but clean as opposed to “unclean” in a sacred context. *Tawhor* is not a religious word; it is a technical term signifying that the cloud’s radiation was minimized or removed by various procedures, including washing or “sacrifice.” Clean means that no radiation was present. Today, in the event of a dirty bomb explosion, the Centers for Disease Control recommends that those affected should “cleanse” themselves by showering or washing the body and hair with soap and water.

[<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation/dirtybombs.asp>]

“Unclean,” *tawmay*, doesn’t mean a sinful state as translators and interpreters insist. Unclean means that someone or something has either been exposed to radiation or could attract it. When the people were clean, i.e., safe from radiation, then the Lord could dwell safely in the midst of the people.

Interestingly, the comparable Egyptian *twr* means “clean” or “cleanse,” indicating a physical process rather than a religious function.

From these correctly translated words, a new picture of the Ark begins to take shape. The biblical scribes were describing natural phenomena, not the miraculous. The radiant, bright cloud that settled on the Ark and through which the Lord spoke was radioactive and, thus, highly dangerous. The Torah documents many incidents of people who got too close and were injured or killed. It was God’s desire to keep the people safe (“clean”) from radiation poisoning, and this explains the lengthy list of safety rules and regulations recorded in the Torah. This is also why the priests—the technicians—underwent rigorous training on how to operate and maintain the Ark *safely*.