

Mark 4.29: ὅταν δὲ **παραδοῖ** ὁ καρπός, εὐθὺς **ἀποστέλλει** τὸ δρέπανον, ὅτι παρέστηκεν ὁ θερισμός.¹

Mark 4.29: et cum se produxerit fructus statim **mittit** falcem quoniam adest messis²

Mark 4.29: And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come.”³

Mark 4.29: But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.⁴

Consider the differences among these translations of the same verse. In the Greek version, I have rendered two words in boldface: **παραδοῖ** (paradoi) and **ἀποστέλλει** (apostellei). The first is from the verb παραδίδωμι (paradídōmi), which which

¹ Aland, K., Aland, B., Karavidopoulos, J., Martini, C. M., & Metzger, B. M. (2012). *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th Edition, Mk 4:29). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

² *Biblia Sacra Vulgata: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*. (1969). (electronic edition of the 3rd edition., Mk 4:29). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

³ *New American Bible*. (2011). (Revised Edition, Mk 4:29). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. (1993). (Mk 4:29). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

means *hand over* or *betray*.⁵ It is used in Luke 1.2 to describe the act of handing down, and in Mark 14.10-11 to describe the act of handing over.⁶ The Greek version says that the fruit (καρπός - karpós) is handed over. The Vulgate and the two Catholic translations obscure this meaning.⁷

The second verb I have rendered in boldface is ἀποστέλλει⁸ (apostellei). This verb is the source of the English *apostle* (ἀποστέλλω means *I send forth*). The Vulgate translations conveys this by the verb *mittit*; the Catholic English versions do not mention a sending forth.

Let us consider Mark 4.29 from the point of view of the Greek text, to see if some deeper insights can be had. The reign of God is like this: God encourages the sowing of the seed and gives it growth. The reign of God grows in us, in ways often unknown to us. When the fruit is ready, God hands it over to us, that we

⁵ In Latin, *handing over* is *traditio*, from which we derive *tradition* and *treason*.

⁶ See also Matthew 25.20, Luke 22.4, Mark 15.10, Luke 4.6, John 19.30, Acts 3.13, 1 Corinthians 3.13, 11.23b, and 15.24 al.

⁷ Hence the Italian saying, *traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor).

⁸ See Matthew 13.41, Mark 11.1, 12.5, Matthew 22.16, 15.24, Luke 11.49 and Acts 26.17. This verb is also found in Matthew 14.35, 21.34 and 37, 27.19, Mark 3.31, 12.4 and 6, John 1.19 al.

might reap the harvest. We are the sickle sent by God, but we are not merely passive instruments in divine hands.⁹ We are called to see as God sees. We are to consider the people in our lives and the events of our lives as gifts handed over to us by God. We accept them gratefully, and are conscious that we are apostles, sent and called by God to let our light shine forth, that all might give praise to God the Father.

⁹ This is an example of synecdoche, a figure of speech in which the part is substituted for the whole. Consider the sentence, *Covington's cathedral is famous*. The meaning is, *The cathedral of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington is famous*.