

My Captain, My Prince, My Author

Following the death of Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman wrote a tribute poem, first published in *Sequel to Drum-Taps* in 1865. The first stanza of that poem reads: "O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done, The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won, The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting, While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring; But O heart! heart! heart! O the bleeding drops of red, Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead."

There have been many captains of movements, industry, armies, and nations that have fallen due to old age, lost their position to others, and gone from this world by assassination. People reach a pinnacle of popularity, power, and or prosperity only to have it all taken away and given to someone else. It seemed to the powers in the Jerusalem Temple and Roman authority that they had defeated and destroyed the power of The Prophet from Galilee when they nailed Him to a cross and later sealed the tomb that held His body. They disowned Jesus and asked for the release of a murderer. They had no idea that Jesus would be risen from the dead and be our captain.

We do indeed have a captain to call us to duty, to train us in service, to lead us in battle, and to provide a home of rest when the battles are over. While we all understand the ideals associated with the title captain, it is not always apparent that it applies to Jesus in the translated texts we have today. A search for the word captain in the 1911 ASV finds one passage in John and twenty in Acts where the captain refers to the temple guard or Roman soldiers. Searching the ESV, we see the one in John and only three in Acts. The CEV has none in John, eleven in Acts, one in James, and one in Revelation. The NASB only has the four in Acts. The NKJV has one in John, four in Acts, and one in Hebrews. And the MKJV only has the one in Hebrews 2:10.

From the fifteenth to the twentieth century, Hebrews 2:10 was translated with the word captain as seen in this extract from the Bishop's Bible of 1568; "*For it became hym, for whom are all thynges, and by whom are all thynges, after he had brought many sonnes vnto glorie, that he shoulde make **the capitayne** of their saluation perfect through afflictions.*" With the release of the Authorized Version, the KJV in 1611, the verse looked about the same. "*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sonnes vnto glory, to make **the Captaine** of their saluation perfect through sufferings.*" The current King James Version updated the last phrase to "*to make **the captain** of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*" But beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the less militant title of author replaced captain.

Strangely enough, the Greek texts have been modified only slightly by recently found scrolls, parchments, and codexes. The newly found documents have not changed the Greek word used in four passages since the second century. The oldest manuscripts, all show the Greek word ἀρχηγός, pronounced, archēgos used in four passages. They are translated prince (Acts 3:15; 5:31), translated as author or captain (Hebrews 12:2) and translated author (Hebrews 2:10). The 28 translations and paraphrase versions checked, use other English words like Lord, ruler, beginner, leader, pioneer, and savior in these four verses.

The accusation made against the Jews by the apostles stated that they "*put to death the **Prince** of life*" (Acts 3:15), But God had raised Him from the dead to continue His work through the apostles. In Acts chapter five, we see Peter and the apostles defending their right to preach about Jesus. Peter

again reminds them of what they have done and what God has done. *"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a **Prince** and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"* (Acts 5:30-31). Notice that in both passages in Acts the Holy Spirit through Luke used a word which is translated **prince**. It is the same word that is translated as either author or captain in Hebrews 2:10 and 12:2. Thayer's Greek Lexicon ascribes three primary translations for this word — **(1) The chief leader**, prince **(2) One that takes the lead** in any thing and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter, pioneer **(3) The author**. Strong's Dictionary has - **a chief leader: - author, captain, prince**.

We can see the difficulty the translators had in determining which English word fits. Is there one word to define the one who helped craft the great plan of salvation, who took the lead in showing us what the righteousness of God is, who sacrificed Himself for our sins, and now resides in glory to ensure the future of the saved?

He is our Savior and Protector, our Captain, our Prince, and the Author of our Salvation.