This work forms the substance of my thesis for a PhD, awarded in 2010 by the University of Manchester. Perhaps more importantly, it represents a thorough (if, perhaps, not final) scratching of an itch I have felt practically as long as I can remember an intellectual life. The problem of translation has always fascinated me, and translation issues seem to me to form the knotty, many-stranded interpretive puzzle at the centre of the puzzle of puzzles that is the Bible. As an earnest and bookish young Christian in the 1970s, I learned to love the Bible – especially the one I was given by my parents on my 16th birthday. I have it in front of me now, inscribed 1977. It is a black-bound RSV, with Metzger’s Oxford Concordance in the back. To me, the heft of the thing, its smell and feel, and above all the words inside, with their quiet, firm insistence, are the Bible. The calm assurance conveyed by these dignified words, though, gave way to confusion, doubt and anxiety as I matured intellectually; this doubt was compounded during my time studying philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford. It continued during adulthood, though covered over by many things, as I found a path through life. I always had a thought that ‘one day’ I would get to the bottom of some of these doubts. Certain developments in my career led at one stage to a lot of long distance commuting and being away from home, and (after exhausting the less edifying ways to spend the time) I decided to learn ancient Greek, and later Hebrew. The studies that this opened up led towards the present work, and in 2006 I finally had the opportunity to take an extended break from a career in business finance to do something full time.

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Phil Goodwin,
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