



NEW TESTAMENT

WORD STUDIES

BY JEFF S. SMITH

FOREWORD

This is a series of lessons that are word studies from the message of God in the Bible. In each of these lessons, we will choose a significant word from the Bible, learn about its original and scriptural usages and apply the knowledge to our own discipleship. Word studies can sometimes become mere academic exercises, but our goal is to learn something eminently practical and useful.

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Word Study of *Makrothumia*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

This begins a series of lessons that are, in fact, word studies from the message of God in the Bible. In each of these lessons, we will choose a significant word from the Bible, learn about its original and scriptural usages and apply the knowledge to our own discipleship. Word studies can sometimes become mere academic exercises, but our goal is to learn something eminently practical and useful. This word study in the Bible concerns the Greek word, μακροθυμία (*makrothumia*, pr. mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah), a word that we associate with patience under very trying circumstances.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word μακροθυμία (Strong's #3115, *makrothumia*, pr. mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) and its adverb form μακροθυμῶς (Strong's #3116, *Makrothumos*, pr. mak-roth-oo-moce'), derives from a compound of two other Greek words

a. the adjective μακρός (Strong's #3117, *Makros*, pr. mak-ros'), which means "of time: long, long lasting"¹

b. the masculine noun θυμός (Strong's #2372, *Thumos*, pr. thoo-mos'), which means "passion, angry, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again"²

2. the compound we are considering in this lesson then might be translated "taking a long time to grow angry or boil over in passion of wrath"

3. Thayer defines *makrothumia* as

a. patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance

b. patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs³

B. Translated Words

1. *makrothumia* appears 14 times in both the New American Standard and King James Bibles

2. it is translated as longsuffering or patience

C. Word Picture

1. in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the related word would have been *'erekh 'appayim*, which literally meant "long of nose," but which indicated "long of breathing" because anger is often evidenced by rapid, audible breathing through the nostrils, as a bull or angry dog snorts at its intended victim

2. the implication is that someone is willing to simmer in feelings of anger and disappointment for a long time before finally deciding to act upon them, rather than simply flying off the handle at the outset of a disagreement

3. *makrothumia* is literally "long of mind, or soul" because the soul is regarded as the seat of human emotions, as opposed to shortness of mind or soul, which would become irascibility, impatience and intolerance⁴

4. *makrothumia* and its Hebrew mate are very picturesque words, and when we find ourselves in situations that tax the energy of our patience, it might be helpful to think about "being long of breath, mind and soul" rather than jumping right into outbursts of anger

II. Some Applications

A. Longsuffering Nature of Our God

1. the starting point for learning longsuffering has to be the example set by God himself, who has suffered with mankind since the very beginning, witnessing countless murders, abuses, wars and atrocities, some even foolishly and futilely committed in his name, but without his approval (cf. First Peter 3:20)

2. that is the God that Moses knew throughout the Exodus, even as the divine longsuffering heard doubters and complainers among the company (Exodus 34:5-9)

a. included in that introduction is notice that God's longsuffering should not be confused with a tolerance of sin or prohibition of judgment, for "The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy,

forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation” (Numbers 14:18).

b. today, it might be argued that the divine longsuffering has waited nearly 2000 years since Christ, and from that, some will grow complacent and convinced that Judgment Day might never dawn, but such minds have misunderstood and abused God’s longsuffering (Romans 2:3-4)

c. and that is exactly the problem that Peter addressed in his final letter (Second Peter 3:8-9, 14-15a)

3. when the faithful are distressed, they can trust in the longsuffering nature of their God (Psalm 86:14-17)

B. Fruit of the Spirit

1. the apostle Paul had formerly blasphemed Christ and persecuted his church, so when he finally saw the light and obeyed the Lord, he saw himself as a living example of God’s awesome patience (1 Timothy 1:15-17)

2. truly, we should all be able to see what great mercy and patience are required to save us from our own sins, so that, in gratitude, we decide to become examples of longsuffering

a. longsuffering -- the ability to suffer long before acting in response or anger -- is a fruit of the Spirit right alongside of love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control because “those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:22-24)

b. “shortsuffering” is no virtue and if we are being driven by the same passions and desires that ruled us before we knew Christ, it is hard to argue that we are really any better off

3. longsuffering is necessary in every aspect of our lives, in the home and outside it (Colossians 3:12-15)

C. Mutual Patience

1. longsuffering is especially necessary, but sometimes in short supply, in the local church and among brethren who are in contact through magazines and e-mail and websites

2. too often, disunity is invited and accepted before any effort is made to study and to try to discover common ground, but that should not be so (Ephesians 4:1-3)

3. when we enter into disagreements with the attitude that we could not possibly be wrong and therefore, we will have peace only if you bend your will to mine, then disunity is practically inevitable

4. longsuffering liberates us to study soberly when our differences are matters of the faith, and to yield and compromise and even suffer wrong when our differences are in the realm of opinion or liberty (see Romans 12:10, James 3:17)

D. Inoffensiveness

1. turning the other cheek is a doctrine and lifestyle that drips with longsuffering and everyone knows how hard it can be to turn the other cheek when the first one is still smarting from a blow upon it

2. as disciples who seek to have influence and win others to the Lord, the worst thing we can do is behave hypocritically so that detractors have cause to ridicule our convictions, consistency and calls

3. this is what Paul sought to avoid (Second Cor. 6:3-10)

a. “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition” (Second Timothy 2:24-25)

b. when we are busy doing our convincing, rebuking and exhorting, it must be accompanied by an attitude of longsuffering instruction, for the results might not be immediate and the response might not be grateful, but if we react with grave disappointment or anger, we will likely never get the positive result we seek

E. Perseverance

1. longsuffering is finally a matter of perseverance (Colossians 1:9-12)

2. whether we are afflicted by persecution, hardship, disappointment, failure or whatever, we cannot allow ourselves to be defeated, but must persevere by suffering long -- as long as necessary

Conclusion

Makrothumia is the biblical virtue of longsuffering and patience and without it, we cannot long survive.

Introduction

This word study in the Bible concerns the Greek word, *αφρων* (*aphron*, pr. af'-rone), a word that is generally associated with a fool.

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word *αφρων* (Strong's #878, *aphron*, pr. pr. af'-rone) derives from a compound of a Greek prefix which is also present in English and another word

a. the privative prefix *α* (Strong's #1), gives a negative sense to whatever word it is attached (e.g. amoral means not moral)⁵

b. the main part of the word is *φρήν* (Strong's #5424, *Phren*, pr. frane), which means "1. the midriff or diaphragm, the parts of the heart. 2. the mind ... the faculty of perceiving and judging"⁶

2. the compound we are considering in this lesson then might be translated "against true perception or rational thought"

3. Thayer defines *aphron* as

a. without reason

b. senseless, foolish, stupid

c. without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly⁷

B. Translated Words

1. *aphron* appears 11 times in the New American Standard and King James Bibles

2. it is translated as fool, foolish, foolish ones, or unwise ones

C. Word Picture

1. in the Old Testament Hebrew, the related words would have been *nebhlah* and *nabhal*

a. but these words are actually much stronger than the word fool might indicate

b. "Taking the words generally, apart from the Wisdom literature, we find *nabhal* frequently translated 'fool' and *nebhlah*, 'folly'; *nabhal*, however, denotes a wicked person, an evil character, 'shamelessly immoral,' equivalent to 'a son of Belial' (Cheyne), rather than a merely 'foolish' person, and *nebhlah*, 'wickedness,' 'shameless impropriety,' rather than simple folly."⁸

2. Nabal is a mildly memorable character from the life story of David; Nabal refused to help David as he fled from King Saul, leaving it to his wife, Abigail, to appease David's murderous anger (First Samuel 25:23-25)

a. Nabal was a fool, not in the sense of being a dunce or a nitwit, but in the sense of being greedy, wicked and shortsighted

3. perhaps Isaiah 32:6 even provides a definition of the Hebrew fool: "For the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice profaneness, and to utter error against Yahweh, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail."

4. in the Greek of the New Testament, several words accompany *aphron* in translating out to fool, but the essential idea is united in meaning mindless, witless, wanting of wisdom, dull or even stupid

II. Some Applications

A. The Proverbial Fool

1. the word fool appears 44 times in the book of Proverbs and forms the basis for our concept of the word even under the New Testament; the way we comprehend *aphron* is dependent upon the way we come to comprehend the Proverbial Fool of the wisdom literature

2. his wisdom and vision are highly suspect, as evidenced by his choices (Proverbs 10:8, 12:15, 13:16, 14:16, 17:16, 18:2, 23:9, 26:4, 27:22)

3. a fool lacks self-control (Proverbs 7:22, 14:3, 17:12, 20:3, 26:6, 29:11)

4. he engages in gossip and other sins as well (Proverbs 10:18, 10:23, 19:1, 29:9, 29:20)

5. he is impossible to improve (Proverbs 17:10, 26:1, 26:11, 28:26)

B. Thou Fool

1. after all this fool talk, the next thing that logically comes to mind as we transition into the New Testament is the Lord's prohibition of calling someone a "fool" (Matthew 5:21-22)
2. the important thing in this matter is the context, one which is dealing with anger and the name-calling that often results
3. when one is angry at his brother without cause and calls him names like empty-head or fool, he is showing a serious lack of self-control and is committing a sin that might be defined as murder within the heart
4. it is not a sin to be angry when there is a just cause, but even then, one must exercise self-control (Ephesians 4:25-27)
5. name-calling, whether profane or just mean, is not fitting for Christians, nor is getting angry beyond proportion (Ephesians 4:29-32)

C. Fool, This Night

1. Jesus used the word fool in one of his parables as well (Luke 12:13-23)
 - a. this parable answers the conflict between the two brothers in a way that tells them to stop obsessing and dividing over property, for their lives need to be about more than competition for prosperity
 - b. in this parable, it is God himself who informs the successful farmer that he is a fool, for he has built bigger barns on Earth, but laid up no treasure in heaven
2. the psalmist twice said, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1, 53:1)
 - a. the atheist scoffs at morality and judgment and presses ahead with his own selfish, short-sighted goals, trampling on those around him without conscience or fear
 - b. there is no more fitting word for such behavior than folly, especially when it is directed at God's children (First Peter 2:13-16)
3. but what of the Christian who acknowledges God and appears to reverence him, but who secretly stores up more vanity and violence in his heart than treasure above? (Luke 12:32-34)
 - a. the fool is more obvious when he scoffs at God and rages against Biblical morality, but he is more discreet when hypocritically wearing his Sunday best to disguise an unconverted life of folly, greed, lust and fear
 - b. he is a fool who knows not God (Ephesians 5:14-18)

D. Become A Fool

1. yet when wisdom and folly are being determined according to worldly standards, the proud intellectual wise man actually needs to become what he would call a fool in order to discover truer wisdom (First Corinthians 1:18-31)
2. in that age, it was the philosopher, the orator, the governor, the debater who thought themselves wise and beyond moral restriction, but the true wisdom of God was not found in their brains, but in the words of simple men like the apostles (First Corinthians 3:18-20)
3. beyond Epicureanism and Stoicism and Platonism, it is "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (Second Timothy 3:15).
 - a. "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13).
 - b. one must open his mind to the possibility that the Bible contains truth and truth that sets men free from ignorance, vice and condemnation (cf. John 8:30-32)

Conclusion

There is nothing worse than being played for a fool, and in this setting, the one doing the playing is the devil.

Introduction

The Greek word *idiotes* sounds an awful lot like the English word idiot and for good reason. An *idiotes* is clearly lacking some pertinent knowledge.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word ἰδιότης (Strong's #2399, *idiotes*, pr. id-ee-o'-tace)
 - a. the main part of the word is ἰδιός (Strong's #2398, *idios*, pr. id'-ee-os), which means "pertaining to one's self, one's own, belonging to one's self"⁹
 - b. that word is found 113 times in the King James New Testament and is used to denote individuality and self
2. *idiotes* is used to show antithesis in rank or ability or between public and private service
3. Thayer defines *idiotes* as
 - a. a private person as opposed to a magistrate, ruler, king
 - b. a common soldier, as opposed to a military officer
 - c. a writer of prose as opposed to a poet
 - d. in the New Testament, an unlearned, illiterate, man as opposed to the learned and educated: one who is unskilled in any art¹⁰

B. Translated Words

1. *idiotes* appears 5 times in the New American Standard and King James Bibles
2. it is translated in the King James as ignorant, rude or unlearned and in the New American Standard as ungifted, unskilled or untrained

C. Word Picture

1. while it sounds as if an *idiotes* must be nothing more than an idiot, that is not exactly the force of the word; rather it is a matter of being simply untrained or unskilled in certain endeavors
2. some *idiotes* certainly were idiots, but many of them were simply common soldiers rather than officers and some were even Christians who were not prophets¹¹
3. Robertson says, "It does not mean 'ignorant,' but a layman, a man not in office (a private person), a common soldier and not an officer, a man not skilled in the schools" (page 52)¹²

II. Some Applications

A. World View

1. we find very quickly this will often be the perspective on Christians held by those in power
 - a. Peter and John are the focus of Luke's early historical record of the church in Jerusalem, but these two men are also the focus of persecution by the learned leaders of Judaism in its home base
 - b. the ability and knowledge of the men confound the Jewish scholars and authorities, however, because it is deeper than should be expected of men of their ilk (Acts 4:1-14)
2. despite their lack of technical religious training or any membership in the Sanhedrin or Pharisaical sect, Peter and John were both bold, articulate and effective
 - a. this might be further evidence of the Holy Spirit's effect upon the apostles (John 15:26-27)
 - b. Jesus made a similar promise regarding situations (Luke 12:11-12)
3. to the world, Christians will seem like idiots—untrained, unskilled and unsophisticated
 - a. to scientists, Christians will seem like idiots as they try to contend for creation
 - b. to philosophers, Christians seem like idiots as they teach an ancient standard of morality
 - c. to jurists, Christians will seem like idiots as they remind of a higher power and judge
 - d. to abortionists, Christians seem like idiots as they plead for the sanctity of innocent life
4. some Christians will find this uncomfortable, yearning to find acceptance among their peers, educators, superiors and the cognoscenti, and they will choose either to quiet or compromise their faith as an offering to the god of this age (Matthew 10:32-37)
 - a. that is only becoming more powerful in a time when faith is held in declining regard and its

most obvious manifestations are often diluted and warped into a form more palatable to carnal tastes

b. it really becomes a challenge for the disciple to be content with his integrity even as others mock him for being an *idiotes*

B. The Uninformed

1. Paul uses the word three times in a span of nine verses to describe those who are simply uninformed—they are *idiotes* in the sense of being ignorant, either of the faith altogether or some immediate aspect of it

2. one must show concern for the *idiotes* while praying and singing (First Corinthians 14:13-17)

a. he is a Christian, but here lacks the spiritual ability to interpret tongues and so cannot say amen to a prayer that he did not comprehend

b. although tongues-speaking has ceased, we still must show concern as song leaders and prayer leaders that we be heard and understood

3. furthermore, the church can actually confuse uninformed people by conducting their worship in such a way that invites chaos and confusion (First Corinthians 14:22-25)

a. it is important we communicate in a way designed to be understood

b. some mistake unbridled emotion for evidence of weightier spirituality, but even this passage encourages self-restraint (First Corinthians 14:39-40)

4. both the unbelieving visitor and the uninformed member are poorly served if the church departs from its purpose to teach and becomes a repository of spontaneity and disorder

C. Self-Deprecation

1. Paul also uses the word *idiotes* one other time in his inspired and preserved writings, and then about himself (Second Corinthians 11:1-6)

a. Paul was very self-deprecating about his speaking ability, admitting to lacking “wisdom of words” and “excellence of speech” (First Corinthians 1:17, 2:1)

b. Peter commented some of Paul’s writings were “hard to understand” (Second Peter 3:16)

c. but where Apollos was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, he was also untrained regarding the baptism of Christ, and it was ineloquent Paul who had to follow him in Ephesus and re-baptize so many converts who had known only the baptism of John that Apollos once knew and taught (see Acts 18:24-19:7)

2. excellence of speech and an eloquent, articulate voice are wonderful tools for the one who would proclaim the word of God or anything else, but they are not necessarily the only tools for the job, nor are they the most vital

a. knowledge matters, for articulate error is deadly, where awkward truth can save

b. Moses tried to avoid his enlistment by claiming, probably correctly, that he was not articulate and Jeremiah actually said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth” (1:6).

3. if God has given a gift to communicate there is no excuse for ignoring it (First Peter 4:10-11)

4. the other side of this usage of *idiotes* is the way that Paul acknowledges his own personal weakness and is able to laugh at himself in a way

a. he does not try to pretend that he is Apollos or feel threatened because he lacks eloquence

b. it is a sign of great maturity if you can acknowledge your own flaws and laugh at those that are otherwise harmless, rather than take yourself so seriously that you melt when one is called to attention

D. Stupidity

1. when we hear the word *idiotes*, we naturally think of an idiot—“a foolish or stupid person”¹³

a. Job’s friend, Bildad, felt like Job was treating him as if he were stupid when Job continually questioned his friends’ theology (Job 18:1-4)

b. Job’s friends did not like to have their deeply-held convictions questioned or analyzed and expected Job simply to confess some sin and get it over with, but that would have been dishonest

2. “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid.”

3. yet that willingness to be instructed requires great humility—enough humility to admit you need to be instructed and are not too proud to learn (Proverbs 30:2-5)

Conclusion

No one wants to be an *idiotes*, but we are all unlearned or untrained in something. Just don’t let it be in the word of God.

Word Study of Philadelphia

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

Where the English language has but one word for love, and that word can refer to one's affection for God, his spouse and greasy cheeseburgers, the Greek language employs several different words that make better distinctions between its kinds. One of those words is *phileo*, as distinguished from the sexual *eros*, the familial *storge* and the transcendent *agape*. A derivative of that word is *philadelphia*, which is not only the American city of brotherly love, but a Greek term for the affection that binds together families and churches.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word φιλαδελφία (Strong's #5360, *Philadelphia*, pr. fil-ad-el-fee'-ah)¹⁴ is part of a family of words that includes *philos* (5384), meaning a friend or companion¹⁵

2. *Philadelphia* is from *Philadelphos* (Strong's #5631), which means "loving brother or sister" and "in a broader sense, loving one like a brother, loving one's fellow countrymen" such as a fellow Israelite or Christian"

3. and so *Philadelphia* means

a. love of brothers or sisters, brotherly love

b. in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren

B. Translated Words

1. *Philadelphia* appears 6 times in the New American Standard and King James Bibles

2. it is translated brotherly love three times, brotherly kindness twice and, love of the brethren once

C. Word Picture

1. Philadelphia, of course, is the name of an American city in eastern Pennsylvania, which was in turn named for a Greek city found most notably in the Bible in the book of Revelation

2. both are cities of brotherly love, the original because it was named "in honor of Attalus II, because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, king of Lydia"¹⁶

3. Jesus sent a letter to the first century church of Philadelphia which serves to bolster its reputation for faithfulness (Revelation 3:7-13)

II. Some Applications

A. Brotherhood

1. there are instances of Israelites referring to one another as brother in the New Testament for no other reason than their fellowship as Jews

2. the preacher Ananias called Saul of Tarsus his brother before he obeyed the gospel based upon that relationship (see Acts 9:17)

3. but the more notable instance of brotherhood involves Christians and their fellowship with one another

a. Peter is the apostle who liked to put the universal church in such terms (First Peter 2:9-10)

b. later in the same chapter, he added to these the concept of brotherhood (First Peter 2:17)

c. and to brotherhood, he added the idea of shared suffering and sacrifice (First Peter 5:5-9)

4. brotherhood (*Adelphotes*) is the state of affection and fellowship that binds together believers wherever they happen to be and it is something we are to love and nurture and enjoy and share, rather than ignore or diminish

B. Let Brotherly Love Continue

1. brotherly love was the focus of Paul's series of admonitions to the Roman saints (Romans 12:9-16)

2. brotherly love makes the kingdom look more honorable to those who might consider entering it (First Thessalonians 4:9-12; see also John 17:20-21)

3. as Peter indicated, brotherly love will sometimes carry a cost, whether it is emotional, economic or personal (Hebrews 13:1-6)

4. love of brethren must be sincere, absent any grumbling, complaining, or withholding (First Peter 1:22-2:3)

5. in fact, brotherly love is far from optional, for the Holy Spirit identifies it as part of making our call and election sure (Second Peter 1:1, 5-11)

Conclusion

Philadelphia is not just a city in Pennsylvania; it is a way of living with others of like, precious faith.

Word Study of *Euaggelion*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

In this lesson, we consider a word that originally meant nothing more than good news of any kind, but came to be associated closely with the coming of God's son, only to be diminished again to mean anything considered to be true.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (Strong's #2097, *Euaggelion*, pr. yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on)¹⁷
2. *Euaggelion* is a compound of εὖ, an adverb meaning good¹⁸ and ἄγγελος, a masculine noun meaning a messenger¹⁹
3. and so Thayer says that *Euaggelion* means
 - a. "a reward for good tidings
 - b. good tidings
 1. the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God
 2. the glad tidings of salvation through Christ
 3. the proclamation of the grace of God manifest and pledged in Christ
 4. the gospel
 5. as the messianic rank of Jesus was proved by his words, his deeds, and his death, the narrative of the sayings, deeds, and death of Jesus Christ came to be called the gospel or glad tidings"²⁰

B. Translated Words

1. *Euaggelion* appears 77 times in the King James Bibles and one fewer in the New American Standard
2. it is almost universally translated gospel in both renderings, becoming "good news" or just some derivative of gospel on the other occasions

C. Word Picture

1. the English word "gospel" that *Euaggelion* presents is an Anglo-Saxon contraction of the "God's spell" or "good spell," meaning God's word or tale or good news.²¹
2. Kenneth S. Wuest (pr. Weest) defines *Euaggelion* as "a message of good news," adding that "This word was in common use in the first century for good news of any kind. The proclamation of the ascension of a new Roman emperor was entitled 'good news.' The evangelists appropriate the word, take it out of the current secular usage, and speak of the message of salvation as good news" (11).²²
3. today, the word is almost universally associated with the story of Jesus Christ

II. Some Applications

A. The Gospel Is Good News

1. surely it is superior to the ascension of a new Roman emperor; this good news is that God's only begotten son has come into the world and is to ascend to sit on the throne of David after his resurrection and return to Heaven
2. what does one do with good news?—publish it, of course (Romans 10:14-17)
 - a. as a result, people all around the world came to trust in Jesus after hearing the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation and being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (see Ephesians 1:13)
 - b. this good news is of a special kind; it is not just news that one reads, but news that compels one to take action
3. Paul says that the gospel story brings life and immortality to light (see Second Timothy 1:10) and that simply continues a theme established early in the ministry of Christ (John 1:6-13)
4. but again, the gospel is good news that one must do something about (First Peter 1:22-2:3)

B. Gospel of the Kingdom

1. the good news is not only about a king, but also about his kingdom, prophesied for centuries and now in existence for millennia, but seldom understood
2. when Jesus began his ministry, he immediately began preaching about it (Matthew 4:17-23)
 - a. most Jews expected a Davidic revival in which a heroic conqueror would send the hated Gentiles scurrying back to Rome, leaving Israel whole and free again
 - b. Jesus whetted their appetites by asserting that the kingdom's coming was nigh (Mark 1:14-15)
3. while he resisted their efforts to take him by force to his premature coronation and failed to live up to the heroic projections of the theologians and public, the dissatisfaction only intensified as he extended mercy to sinners, Gentiles and Samaritans, hinting at the true spiritual nature of the kingdom he would found and call the church (Ephesians 3:1-7)
4. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom to come and it did when he established his church on Pentecost and ascended to the throne of David in Heaven (see Acts 2:29-33)

C. The Great Commission

1. Jesus had taught more broadly than most Jews were comfortable with, going beyond the theologians' usual haunts to extend mercy to prostitutes, soldiers and publicans
2. Jesus intended his gospel to be a witness to all nations and made that order part of the great commission given to the apostles
3. one such resister was Saul of Tarsus, roughly the same age as Jesus, but who grew up to persecute his church, only to find reason to be converted on the road to Damascus and baptized into Christ once he arrived there; Paul would later write of his love for the gospel (Romans 1:14-17)
4. that commission extended beyond the apostles to every believer who cares for the souls around him, causing the Philippian church to have "fellowship in the gospel" with Paul who was set to defend it around the world (see Philippians 1:5,17)
5. likewise, we all must defend ourselves along with the gospel of Christ (Ephesians 6:14-20)

D. Rivals

1. since the gospel was perceived to be just one glad message among hundreds, it immediately met with resistance and even rivalry
2. the Corinthian church was in danger of submitting to another gospel (Second Corinthians 11:1-4)
3. the clear message is that we should never put up with a different gospel—one that detracts from the deity and humanity of Christ, or delays his kingdom to the future, or promises salvation by faith only or gives his authority to angels (Galatians 1:6-8)
 - a. when Peter and Barnabas refused to eat anymore with Gentile converts, Paul reckoned that they were not being "straightforward about the truth of the gospel" (Galatians 2:14)
 - b. their error did not concern the death, burial or resurrection of Christ, but a matter of the doctrine surrounding him
4. these other rival gospels can cause saved souls to be lost all over again (Colossians 1:21-23)

E. Obey the Gospel

1. that is because the gospel is good news worthy of obedience, extending beyond the simple story of Christ's death, burial and resurrection to include every word of his will and the teachings of the New Testament
2. when Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, his first question was about what he needed to do to obey it in baptism (see Acts 8)
 - a. Paul worried about his hearers who would not obey the gospel (see Romans 10:16), cautioning that they would be lost (Second Thessalonians 1:6-10)
 - b. Peter was just as concerned (First Peter 4:17-19)

Conclusion

The gospel is good news that one must heed to be delivered from very bad news.

Word Study of *Heilikrineia*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine a word that is various translated with sincerity or purity in mind.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word εἰλικρίνεια (Strong's #1505, *Heilikrineia*, pr. i-lik-ree'-ni-ah')²³
2. *Heilikrineia* is a noun from *heile* (the sun's ray) and *κρίνω* (2919), meaning to select or judge²⁴
3. and so Thayer says that *Heilikrineia* and its adjective form, *Heilikrines*, mean
 - a. "purity, sincerity, ingenuousness"
 - a. "pure, sincere, unsullied"²⁵
 - b. "found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun's light"

B. Translated Words

1. *Heilikrines* and its noun form are rare words in classical Greek and appear only a combined 5 times in the Koine Greek of the King James Bible
2. the noun and adjective are variously translated with sincerity or purity in view

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay states that the word has two basic usages
 - a. it means "unmixed, without alloy, pure" as in pure fire or a total eclipse of the sun
 - b. it also corresponds to our use of the words pure or sheer, as in pure intellect or sheer, unrelieved evil
2. Barclay also lists two possible etymologies for *Heilikrineia*
 - a. first, it may be derived from *eilein*, meaning "to shake to and fro in a sieve to extract every last particle of foreign matter, leaving behind an absolutely pure substance"
 - b. second, Thayer's sun explanation is also a possibility, meaning that something could be held up to clear light and reveal no faults or flaws, as in an eastern bazaar where pottery, glassware or cloth might otherwise be hiding serious imperfections in the darkened tents
3. the point that emerges from *Heilikrineia* is whether our innermost thoughts could be publicly exposed and stand the test of openness regarding their purity and motive
4. "The Christian purity is a purity which is sifted until the last admixture of evil is gone, a purity which has nothing to conceal and whose inmost thoughts and desires will bear the full glare of the light of the day."²⁶

II. Some Applications

A. Sincerity

1. the translators of the New American Standard Bible understood the import of this word to correlate to our impression of the word "sincerity"
2. sincerity is a word that has a somewhat checkered reputation, because although sincerity is absolutely vital to true worship and discipleship, by itself it is not a substitute for obedience and orthodoxy (ignorance is an explanation, not an excuse; see Genesis 20)
 - a. Paul uses the word in his first letter to the Corinthians, trying to encourage them to throw off the malice and wickedness that had seeped into the church from the city outside (First Corinthians 5:1-8)
 - b. when Paul uses the word, he is often responding to allegations that he was not really an apostle and was either violating his authority or seeking to get rich (Second Corinthians 1:12-14 and 2:12-17)
 - c. later, he addressed the Philippians with the same hope he had for the brethren in Corinth (Philippians 1:9-11)
 - d. Peter used the word in much the same fashion (Second Peter 3:1-2)
3. it is possible for one to go through all the right motions and jump through all the proper hoops and still be unfaithful in his heart and this God will not accept or overlook

- a. sincerity is the consequence of love and appreciation in our worship and discipleship so that we do the right thing gladly and without reservation or regret
- b. sincerity is not a substitute for doing the right thing—it doesn't make false doctrine or action acceptable—but it is indispensable nevertheless

B. Judging Heilikrineia

1. perhaps the first question that arises is how I am going to judge the purity of my brother's intentions, motivations and thoughts, especially about me, but also about God and others
2. if that is the first question, it is the wrong one, for it is God's business to judge his servant's hearts and all that we can do is analyze their actions and hope for purity in the background (Matthew 7:15-20)
3. the more important matter is the one I can do something about and that is judging my own sincerity and purity (Second Corinthians 13:5-6)
 - a. some people are too hard on themselves and they are disappointed when they discover that they are morally imperfect, but they are in the minority
 - b. the majority of people end up being too easy on themselves, subconsciously deciding which flaws and bad habits they will choose to tolerate and expect God to overlook
4. my sincerity, though, is vital to my spiritual and moral health and my expectation of a hopeful appointment with God's eternal judgment when I die (Hebrews 4:11-13)

C. Insincerity in Worship and Discipleship

1. the people in Amos's day were insincere worshipers (Amos 5:16-27)
 - a. their hearts were divided among affection for Jehovah and their idols, but their love of self was always paramount
 - b. they went through the Mosaic motions and worshiped according to the Law with one notable exception—they did it heartlessly and hypocritically
2. the people in Malachi's time were no better (Malachi 1:6-8)
3. the scribes and Pharisees who lived 400 years later were meticulous in their orthodoxy, except that they had no stomach for the abstract points of the Law (Matthew 23:23-24)
4. as the New Testament closed, even the church was proving to lack immunity when it came to insincerity and hypocrisy (Revelation 3:14-17)

D. Let God Sift You

1. as long as the lights were dim, each of these people probably appeared to possess great or at least sufficient piety, and yet when the light of Christ shines upon them, they are found to be very much wanting (John 3:16-21)
2. inconsistency in our discipleship and insincerity in our worship are heart problems (Mark 7:14-23)
3. my only hope of retaining purity and holiness is to allow God to sift my spirit and to use his word to prune away the dead branches of covetousness, lust, malice and insensitivity (Second Timothy 2:19-23)

Conclusion

Anytime one honestly compares himself to the doctrine of Christ, he is liable to feel like he is being sifted in a sieve or tried upon a rack, but that is the only method by which our flaws can become evident and treatable

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine a word that has to do with sexual immorality of every kind, a sin prevalent today, as it has really always been, but one that Christians must work extra hard to resist because it has become so acceptable to most people.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word πορνεία (Strong's #4202, *Porneia*, pr. por-ni'-ah)²⁷
2. *Porneia* is a feminine noun from *Pornos* (#4205), which means “a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse”²⁸
 - a. its verb form, *Porneuo* (4203) is defined as “to prostitute one's body to the lust of another”
 - b. the sin is committing any sexual immorality—any sexual act beyond the will of God who sanctions that kind of relationship only within marriage (Hebrews 13:4)
3. and so Thayer says that *Porneia* means
 - a. “illicit sexual intercourse
 1. adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc.
 2. sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18
 3. sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; Mk. 10:11,
 - b. metaph. the worship of idols
 - a. of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols”²⁹

B. Translated Words

1. *Porneia* appears 26 times in the King James and one fewer in the New American Standard
2. it is translated fornication every time in the AV, but as fornication, 4; fornications, 2; immoralities, 1; immorality, 16; sexual immorality, 1; unchastity, First in the NAS

C. Word Picture

1. the word picture of *porneia* is a distastefully animal one
2. the basic expression “sexual immorality” would have been understood by first century readers of Scripture within a context of what that meant under the Law of Moses
3. without resurrecting the old covenant, we must stop to contemplate how broad was the definition of sexual immorality (Leviticus 18)
 - a. there is an elemental divide between God's people and the world-at-large and as God brought Israel into the Promised Land, he hoped to maintain that distinctiveness (Leviticus 18:1-5)
 - b. incest was categorized as sexual immorality in great detail (see verses 6-18)
 - c. adultery, homosexuality and bestiality (see verses 20-23) were also described as sexually immoral and first century readers of the New Testament would have understood the term *Porneia* to include all of them as well (Leviticus 18:24-29)
4. as for fornication, the Law of Moses penalized the fornicator by stoning her to death, “because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house” (Deuteronomy 22:21).

II. Some Applications

A. Out of the Heart

1. we sometimes like to disassociate our actions from our beliefs, pretending that when we sin, we are merely acting out of character, and that the sin does not accurately reflect who we are inside
 - a. celebrity apologies for racist comments, sexual dalliances and fraud are often nothing more than this sort of irresponsibility
 - b. the truth, however, is almost always very clear—that one's actions do tend to reflect his true identity—the person he is underneath the layer of civility we wear as a costume or disguise
2. *Porneia*, in particular, is not a hand problem or an eye problem, or a problem with any other organ—it is a heart problem (Mark 7:20-23)
3. *Porneia* will keep a person from going to Heaven (Galatians 5:19, 21b)

- a. adultery, fornication, uncleanness and lewdness all have reference to sexually immoral behavior that our world finds so irresistible and pleasant, but which only adds to its miseries in broken hearts, broken homes, broken minds, disease, abortion, unwanted children and poverty
- b. abstinence from every aspect of *Porneia* is the path of righteousness (Colossians 3:1-7)

B. Cause for Divorce and Allowance for Remarriage

- 1. *Porneia* is so destructive to the sense of marital loyalty and purity that it is the sole ground upon which the marriage covenant can be dissolved (Matthew 5:27-32)
- 2. men in particular are warned against allowing their lust to be provoked by the things that they view or the places they visit or the people with whom they associate because their marriages are instantly placed at risk as a result
- 3. divorcing one's mate for sexual immorality permits the chase partner to marry another eligible person (Matthew 19:9), but to remarry otherwise is simply more immorality and uncleanness

C. Spiritual Fornication

- 1. as becomes clear from Thayer's definition and many Old Testament writings, *Porneia* is often used metaphorically to describe spiritual fornication, rather than physical and literal (Jeremiah 3:6-9)
- 2. Jesus tried to bring this point forward during his ministry to convict those who fornicate with the devil (John 8:37-44)
 - a. these Jews were spiritually illegitimate, for the name of Jehovah was on on their Hebrew birth certificates, but their behavior bore an overwhelming resemblance to Satan, the father of lies
 - b. spiritual fornication today is less about bowing before Molech or adoring Diana and more about loving and practicing a convenient lie when truth is too much
- 3. worldliness is spiritual fornication (James 4:1-5)
 - a. selfishness is the epitome of modern spiritual adultery, in which God's name is on one's rebirth certificate, but his behavior is devilish (James 3:13-18)
 - b. materialism is often the vehicle in which selfishness drives (Revelation 18:3-5)

D. Take Flight

- 1. the Revelation counsels the people of God to come away from spiritual harlotry and the literal kind is just as dangerous, but both can be overcome (First Corinthians 6:9-13, 18)
- 2. a sexual relationship is not about proving maturity, satisfying one's peers or holding onto a boyfriend who is applying pressure to the relationship; sex is only safe in marriage (First Corinthians 7:2)
- 3. "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints" (Ephesians 5:3).
- 4. God's will is that each of us abstains from *Porneia* (First Thessalonians 4:1-8)

Conclusion

Porneia is hard to avoid in this coarse culture of ours, but we must find a way.

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine a word that has to do with fear, respect and terror, if not so much that little nervousness we experience with the number 13 or enclosed spaces.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word φόβος (Strong's #5401, *Phobos*, pr. fob'-os)³⁰
2. *Phobos* is a masculine noun from *phobomai*, which means "to be put in fear"
3. Thayer says that *Phobos* means
 - a. fear, dread, terror
 1. that which strikes terror
 - b. reverence, respect (for authority, rank, dignity)
 1. reverence for one's husband

B. Translated Words

1. *Phobos* appears 47 times in the King James and two fewer in the New American Standard
2. it is translated fear or terror in the KJV, but more precisely in the NASB: cause of fear, 1; fear, 37; fearful, 1; fears, 1; intimidation, 1; respect, 1; respectful, 1; reverence, 1; sense of awe, 1

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay says that *Phobos* is a middle word in Greek, a neutral word that is only made positive or negative by its context (227)³¹
2. *Phobos* might describe godly reverence in one passage and utter cowardice in another, but in Greek, it always had the idea of running away inherent to it
3. Barclay writes further, "The feeling of reverence, the awareness of God, is at once the prophylactic against sin, the dynamic of the Christian life, and the mainspring of Christian effort. But when reverence turns to fear in the lower sense of the term then religion becomes a stunted and inadequate thing, which, because it has lost its grace has lost its glory" (232).³²

II. Some Applications

A. Godly Fear

1. godly fear, or reverence, is clearly on the positive side of *Phobos*, where its verb form appears in the teaching of Christ about his disciples' position in between God and the pressures of the flesh (Matthew 10:23-31)
 - a. it is a little ironic that the fear of God itself is the antithesis of cowardice, because reverence for the divine so often brings one under the scrutiny of persecutors and wicked authorities
 - b. still, God's "mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50)
2. this fear of God is often confused with terror, and many as a result are so terrified by the thought of God that they can never approach him—he becomes to them like a severe father always ready with the whip and seldom satisfied even with his children's great effort, but that is not the image of God the New Testament writers wished to perpetuate (1 John 4:17-19)
 - a. perfect love renders God's fatherhood a blessed and sweet thing, so long as one is faithful, though flawed
 - b. when he begins to take God's mercy for granted and sin willfully, thinking that God is no terror to evil works, his faithfulness wanes and he loses his investment in mercy (Hebrews 10:26-31; cf. Romans 11:20)
3. as the thieves hung beside Jesus on the cross, one wagged his tongue and blasphemed the dying savior, but the other asked him, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation" (Luke 23:40)
 - a. as creator and judge, God is worthy not only of affection or grudging obedience, but true reverence and even appreciation
 - b. "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of

body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God” (Second Corinthians 7:1).

4. when Peter entered the house of Cornelius, he finally realized that God did not judge faithfulness based upon heredity, but upon reverence (Acts 10:34-35)

a. “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear” (First Peter 1:17).

b. to the Christian, the fear is not terror, but a certain respect and reverence for a good God who rewards holiness and punishes both wickedness and apostasy (Jude 22-23)

c. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15)

B. Cowardice

1. the New Testament is also filled with examples of people responding through fear and some of them were disciples who compromised their convictions or denied their association with the Lord because they feared what men might do to them

2. the disciples were afraid when a storm hit the sea on which they were boating, later when they saw Jesus walking on the water and thought it was a ghost, and much more when Jesus was arrested by the high priest

a. Peter's fears are the most recorded in the gospels (Matthew 14:25-32)

b. his fears were even greater when he denied knowing Jesus after his arrest, but he did not suddenly become immune after the resurrection (Galatians 2:11-13)

3. the fear of God is intended to devour every other fear that plague us; cowardice in the face of persecutors and enemies becomes the real sin (First Peter 3:13-17, Revelation 21:7-8)

4. Paul was afraid when he came to Macedonia, but he could not afford to become a slave to his fears; “For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us” (see Second Corinthians 7:5).

C. Respect for Others

1. another aspect of *Phobos* involves transferring our respect for God onto others so that we treat them kindly (Ephesians 5:18-21)

2. submitting to one another is a pleasant way of getting along with others, especially brethren and sometimes also our spouses (First Peter 3:1-2)

D. Respect for Authority

1. *Phobos* also comes up in our relationships with authorities whom we owe respect as parents, employers or rulers (Ephesians 6:1-9)

2. Peter added that we should “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor” (First Peter 2:17).

Conclusion

We usually associate *Phobos* with phobias today—generally they are irrational fears of mostly harmless things. In the Greek New Testament, however, fear is middle word and can be good when directed at God, but wicked when given to persecutors.

Word Study of *Oinophlugia*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Oinophlugia*, a word that begins with wine and ends with silly things.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word οἰνοφλυγία (Strong's #3632, *Oinophlugia*, pr. oy-nof-loog-ee'-ah)³³
2. *Oinophlugia* is a feminine noun from *oinos*, the Greek word for wine (οἶνος 3631),³⁴ and a form of the base of *Phluaros*, Greek for babbling or silly things (φλύαρος 5397)³⁵
3. Thayer says that *Oinophlugia* means "to bubble up, overflow ... drunkenness" (442)³⁶

B. Translated Words

1. *Oinophlugia* appears First time in both the King James and New American Standard Bibles, in First Peter 4:3
2. it is translated excess of wine in the former and drunkenness in the latter

C. Word Picture

1. the mental image one conjures from studying about *Oinophlugia* is of a man or woman so filled with liquor or some other drug that he has lost his physical and moral equilibrium and and stumbling about in word and in deed without inhibition or composure
2. his inebriation is initially most evident in his speech which is bubbling up with the regrettable silliness that mind-altering substances tend to produce
3. he is a danger to himself and to others because he has lost the ability to discern what he should and shouldn't say and what he can and cannot safely do

II. Some Applications

A. Drunk Like Noah

1. after the ark landed and the rainbow appeared and Shem, Ham and Japheth were identified as the men through whom the world would be repopulated, Noah found a new line of work to fill the time once occupied with boat building (Genesis 9:20-27)
2. Noah is obviously angry and justifiably angry at the impertinence of his son, Ham, but if Noah had not fermented his grapes and sampled the concoction, he would not have been incapacitated and ripe for embarrassment
3. understand that when you are drunk—a little or a lot—you look like an idiot and you make a fool out of yourself and you are vulnerable to people making an even bigger fool out of you
4. Ham was not in sin for seeing his father in this condition, but fell into his father's disfavor because he made light of it, when he could have and should have restored his father's modesty and dignity; we have to learn to look away from others' shame, rather than finding it to be an entertaining spectacle (Ephesians 5:11-14)

B. Drunk Like Lot

1. things went even worse when the patriarch Lot got drunk, because he had daughters, not sons (Genesis 19:30-38)
2. here is another example of people trying to meet their perceived needs in their own way, regardless of morality and providence
 - a. their sin is similar to that of Abraham and Sarah who doubted that God could provide them an heir through Sarah's aged womb
 - b. Lot's daughters go further than hiring a concubine; they volunteer for incest, which they figured their father would have rejected
3. and so they get him drunk on consecutive nights and so drunk that Lot is clearly unaware of what happens; the Moabite and Ammonite people were the result
 - a. when one is drunk, even a little, his inhibitions go dormant, permitting him and sometimes even urging him to do things that he would never do while sober and aware

b. fornication and yes, even incestuous flirtation and impregnation, can be the outcome when someone gets drunk (First Corinthians 15:33 and Second Timothy 2:22)

C. Drunk Like Nabal

1. drunkenness will make a fool out of a person, but sometimes the person is a fool to begin with, like Nabal, the husband of Abigail (1 Samuel 25:36-38)

2. Abigail told Nabal that she had gone to David and negotiated peace with him, killing Nabal's pride and perhaps causing him to suffer a stroke or heart attack

3. Nabal was very drunk one night and probably very hungover the next day; alcohol use and abuse do great harm to the body in addition to drowning the spirit (Proverbs 31:4-7)

D. Drunk Like Uriah

1. after David impregnated Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, the king tried to cover up his sin by getting Uriah into his wife's bed, so that when the pregnancy became obvious, the soldier would simply assume that he was the baby's father (Second Samuel 11:11-13)

2. David got him too drunk, however, and he could not go to see his wife, but passed out on his couch with the servants of his lord

3. clearly, it was of God that Uriah did not make it home, but alcohol is still a great divider in many homes where one or both of the mates drink and drink to excess (First Thessalonians 5:5-10)

a. when drunk, people tend to say and do things that they later regret, but are unable to take back, resorting to violent words and deeds that leave indelible bruises upon the ones they claim to love

b. they are called "angry drunks" and they are miserable to live with

E. Drunk Like Elah

1. a few young people die every year from drowning in alcohol or their own vomit after drinking themselves drunk; many more deaths are attributed to driving while intoxicated

2. alcohol is dangerous because of the way it numbs the mind, which is precisely the condition people crave as they imbibe, never imagining that it might be fatal (1 Kings 16:8-10)

Conclusion

History could tell the tale of many more situations in which alcohol and similar drugs spelled doom for those who used them. We have to be smarter than that.

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Aselgeia*, a very grim word according to the commentators, who foresee little hope for one that has gone that far into sexual insolence.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word ἀσέλγεια (Strong's #766, *Aselgeia*, pr. as-elg'-i-a)
2. *Aselgeia* is a feminine noun "from a compound of *a* (as a negative particle) and a presumed *selges* (of uncertain derivation, but apparently meaning continent)"³⁷
3. Thayer says that *Aselgeia* means "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence"³⁸

B. Translated Words

1. *Aselgeia* appears 9 times in the King James and one more in the New American Standard Bible
2. it is translated filthy, lasciviousness and wantonness in the Authorized Version and licentiousness, sensual and sensuality in the NASV

C. Word Picture

1. Thayer surmises that that the main part of the word derives from a city called Selges of Pisidia, where the citizens excelled in strictness of morals, making this Greek word the opposite of their habit³⁹
2. his definition continues to specify "wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc."⁴⁰
3. Barclay reasons that "in many ways *aselgeia* is the ugliest word in the list of NT sins." After describing its various translations as lasciviousness, wantonness, licentiousness and sensuality, he comments further that "all these translations fail to give the one essential characteristic of *aselgeia*."⁴¹
 - a. "It is Lightfoot who seizes on the essential quality in *aselgeia*. He says that a man may be 'unclean' (*akathartos*) and hide his sin, but the man who is *aselges* (the adjective) shocks public decency. Here is the very essence of *aselgeia*; the man in whose soul *aselgeia* dwells is so much in the grip of sin, so much under its domination, that he does not care what people say or think so long as he can gratify his evil desire. He is the man who is lost to shame. Most men have enough decency left to seek to hide their sin, but the *aselges* is long past that. He will be guilty of any outrageous conduct, and care for nothing except to satisfy his desires."⁴²
 - b. Barclay notes as well that Josephus coupled the word with the Greek *mania*, meaning madness of course
 - c. "*Aselgeia* is a grim word. It is the wanton insolence that is lost to shame. It is a grim commentary on human nature that a man can be so mastered by sin that in the end he loses even shame."⁴³

II. Some Applications

A. Heart Problem

1. if we focus on the idea of *aselgeia* being outrageous conduct of a sensual nature, it becomes apparent that this is a heart problem, and not just a symptom of something minor or tolerable
 - a. a person might bleed because he has a little paper cut that will clot and heal very quickly and harmlessly, or he might have hemophilia, which is far more serious and potentially fatal
 - b. when a person is comfortable cavorting in a licentious way, he is dealing with much more than a paper cut; he has become a spiritual hemophiliac and the window for redemption is closing
2. the Pharisees would have preferred that Jesus diagnose more tangible maladies than the spiritual defilement he found them in, even as they obsessed over the cleanliness of the china (Mark 7:1-5)
 - a. Jesus declared that the Pharisees were the defiled ones who abandoned their aged parents and readily laid aside the commandments of God whenever they conflicted with one of their self-serving traditions (see verses 6-13)

b. when he had taken leave of these hypocrites, he tried to make it more meaningful for his followers (Mark 7:14-23)

1. the lewdness of verse 22 is the *aselgeia* of unchastity, dirty jokes, indecent handling of each other and so forth

2. it is hard to escape a defilement that is in inside of you and that is where *aselgeia* lives if we let it feed off of us like a parasite

3. where the worldly, heathen and hypocrite might see little harm and much acceptance for *aselgeia*, the disciple of Christ risks his social position to abstain from such things that invite lust into his heart (First Peter 4:1-4)

B. Providing For The Flesh

1. the provocation of lust and partial satisfaction of the sex urge are the only reasons for behaving in a way that is defined by *aselgeia* (Romans 13:11-14)

a. lewdness and lust are pairs, in that the former often causes the latter, and it is the fault of the person who behaves lewdly if lust is the result (Matthew 18:3-7)

b. dressing like a flirt and inviting people to think sexually about you is a sin, and a lack of concern about that is exactly the kind of impudence that the early scholars attached to *aselgeia*

c. behaving wantonly is creating opportunities for the flesh—for the devil—to exploit people’s weaknesses—maybe other people’s weaknesses rather than your own—and you will answer for that as surely as if you had lusted yourself (Romans 8:5-8)

2. I have preached enough of these lessons to see the words roll right off people’s backs like water on a duck

a. some might suppose that I am being extremist or too severe, but when you simply take the English words and their proper definitions, you arrive at a level of morality that is simply higher than what is acceptable to most people today, even the religious ones

b. I want to warn you further about that ability to dismiss this kind of warning without any sense of guilt or concern (Ephesians 4:17-24)

C. Kingdom Disqualification

1. the plain fact is that behaving as *aselgeia* describes will disqualify you from being fit to appear before God in his heavenly kingdom (Galatians 5:19-21)

a. the works of the flesh are evident and the sight of a young girl in a bikini, or the sound of a story about naughty people, or the sensation of rubbing against someone in an unholy embrace or dance cause emotional responses that are obvious—obvious to everyone it seems except Christians who want to feel righteous and indulge the flesh a little at the same time

b. worldly folks waste no time, telling us plainly that all these *aselgeia* behaviors excite the senses in a sensual way

2. the Christian who fools around with sensuality will gradually lose the ability to feel guilt about it and will end up lost in a sea of wantonness (Second Corinthians 12:19-21)

D. False Teachers

1. part of the reason that some Christians get comfortable with *aselgeia* is the work of false teachers in exploiting those desires and also making such things seem all right as long as one feels saved and abstains from actual acts of sexual immorality (Second Peter 2:1-3)

a. the “destructive ways” in verse Second is actually from a form of *aselgeia* and indicates that covetousness and sensuality are often at the heart of false teaching (Second Peter 2:12-14, 18-19)

b. some people work very hard to combat their weaknesses for the flesh, enjoy limited success, but are committed to the effort until some false teaching comes along that says it is nothing to worry about, and so they lay down their arms and surrender

2. some cults go ever further, of course, but sensuality should be no part at all (Jude 3-4)

Conclusion

Remember the definition of *aselgeia* and don’t pretend that you can be ignorant and all right.

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Logos*, a word with a very ordinary meaning, but which becomes pivotal in explaining the identity of Jesus Christ to people without a background in the Hebrew prophets and who are more attuned to secular philosophy.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word λόγος (Strong's #3056, *Logos*, pr. log'-os)⁴⁴
2. *Logos* is a masculine noun from *Lego* (3004), meaning, "to say, to speak"⁴⁵
3. in the Greek, *Logos* has two essential meanings—word and reason—but the New Testament writers invented a third and applied the term to Jesus Christ, the son of God
 - a. "of speech ... a word, uttered by a living voice, embodies a conception or idea ... what someone has said ... discourse ... doctrine, teaching ..."
 - b. "its use as respect to the MIND alone ... reason, the mental faculty of thinking, meditating, reasoning, calculating ..."

B. Translated Words

1. *Logos* appears 333 times in the King James and five fewer in the New American Standard Bible
2. it is translated Word, referring to Christ seven times in the AV as well as account, saying, speech, thing and, of course, word
3. the New American Standard tries to be much more precise, using a couple of dozen English words to hone in on the contextual meaning of *Logos* in each setting

C. Word Picture

1. the *Logos*, then, is most notably the message about Jesus Christ as well as the Lord himself—in this unusual case, the messenger is as much the message as any other part of it
2. Thayer writes, "In [the gospel of] John, [*Logos*] denotes the essential Word of God, Jesus Christ, the personal wisdom and power in union with God, his minister in creation and government of the universe, the cause of all the world's life both physical and ethical, which for the procurement of man's salvation put on human nature in the person of Jesus the Messiah, the second person in the Godhead, and shone forth conspicuously from His words and deeds."⁴⁶
 - a. Barclay explains that John "was clothing Christ in a dress that a Greek could understand" rather than "outworn and Judaistic categories"
 - b. he quotes Philo, who said that the *Logos* is "the tiller by which the pilot of the universe steers all things"
3. Barclay says that, "*ho logos*, the word, becomes almost a synonym for the Christian message"⁴⁷
 - a. he also ties the New Testament use of the word to the idea in Greek philosophy that was embodied in *Logos*
 1. almost six centuries before Christ, an Ephesian philosopher named Heraclitus taught that the world was constantly in flux or change and that nothing was static in the world
 2. the only thing that kept the universe from descending into chaos was that, "all things happen according to the logos"
 3. in the world, he taught, there is a reason and a mind at work
 - b. the Holy Spirit adopted this word and the idea it represented to introduce the western world to a God formerly unknown to it (Acts 17:22-31)

II. Some Applications

A. Functions of the Word

1. the word judges (John 12:44-50 and Hebrews 4:11-13)
2. the word purifies (John 15:1-5; cf. First Timothy 4:5)

3. the word brings belief (Acts 4:1-4, Romans 1:16-17, 10:17)
4. the word brings rebirth (First Peter 1:22-25)

B. Duties to the Word

1. the word must be heard (see Matthew 13:18-23, Acts 13:7, 44)
2. the word must be received (James 1:21-25 and Acts 17:11)
3. the word must be abided (John 8:28-32)
4. the word must be kept (John 14:23-24)
5. the word must be boldly proclaimed and ministered (Second Timothy 4:1-5; cf. Acts 6:4)

C. Failures to the Word

1. the word can be rejected (First Peter 2:7-8)
2. the word can be corrupted (Second Corinthians 2:14-17)
3. the word can be made ineffective (Mark 7:9-13)

Conclusion

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Hubris*, a word associated with pride and arrogance, especially in defying reason and sense in order to take risks and make personal gains.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word ὑβρις (Strong's #5196, *Hubris*, pr. hoo'-bris)⁴⁸
2. *Hubris* is a feminine noun from *Huper* (5228), meaning, "over, beyond, more than"⁴⁹
3. in the Greek, *Hubris* has four definitions built around this idea of inflation
 - a. insolence
 1. impudence, pride, haughtiness
 - b. a wrong springing from insolence, an injury, affront, insult
 - c. mental injury and wantonness of its infliction being prominent
 - d. injury inflicted by the violence of a tempest⁵⁰

B. Translated Words

1. *Hubris* appears three times in the King James and New American Standard Bibles, but its derivatives are even more telling in applying the faith of Christ to the Greek world of superstition
2. it is harm, hurt and reproach in the older translation and damage or insults in the newer

C. Word Picture

1. hubris was considered by the Greeks to be the supreme sin, the cause of the downfall of so many heroes and legends who built their reputation on great deeds, but eventually became drunk on their laurels and went too far
2. Barclay quotes Q.G. de Burgh, who wrote, "its root meaning is the violent over-stepping of the mark, the insolence of triumph, and the pride of life that tramples underfoot the unwritten laws of gods and men" (126)⁵¹
3. he attaches hubris to the insatiable thirst for power, imperialism and unbridled self-assertion; it is the drive to violently trample upon others to enrich oneself, and which often results in eventual comeuppance
4. hubris often played out in the downfall of great men, whose travails were blamed on irking the gods with their insolence, and against this backdrop of superstition and ethics, the New Testament was written and lived

II. Some Applications

A. Arrogant Insolence

1. one writer suggests that the problem with hubris is that a person gradually forgets that he is a creature and begins to look at himself as creator—perhaps he is the creator of a nation or an invention or a profitable business or a reputation for success (Romans 1:18-25, 28-32)
2. his success resupplies his confidence until it swells out of proportion and he forgets that God is the giver of every gift (Acts 12:20-23)
3. where Herod drips with arrogance, a Christian deflects too much praise and centers himself in reality (First Timothy 1:12-14)
4. the tower of Babel was built upon hubris and destroyed to remind man that there was a limit to how far God would let him go (First John 2:15-17)

B. Public Humiliation

1. the Proverbs reveal that, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).
2. the ancients equated the downfall of a once great man to the displeasure of their various gods of the sea or the sky, punishing the man for his insolence
3. most of that can be ascribed to idolatrous superstition, but it remains true that the God of

heaven can and will punish people for their insolence

a. Jesus was accused of hubris on one occasion when he was rebuking the scribes and Pharisees (Luke 11:42-45)

b. Luke asserted that Paul and Barnabas were treated with hubris at Iconium when a violent attempt was made to stone them (see Acts 14:5), but they refused to view their mistreatment as any punishment by the gods, for they knew the only true God supported them (Second Thessalonians 2:1-4)

c. in fact, Paul began to look at these misfortunes of hubris—public humiliations—as badges of honor and opportunities to increase in spiritual strength (Second Corinthians 12:10)

4. we learn that Christians must never operate or evangelize from arrogant insolence, but that they might be accused of it anyway and that their persecution might make it appear to others as if they are being abandoned or punished for their efforts

C. Breaking God's Heart

1. man's chief foray into insolence, of course, occurred around a Roman cross in the city of Jerusalem nearly two millennia ago (Luke 18:31-34)

a. Jesus used the idea of hubris to describe his impending mistreatment at the hands of man

b. he would not only be killed, but would be mocked and ridiculed in the process

2. the ancient Greeks were right when they identified hubris—extreme personal pride—as a great evil, and when the Roman governors and Jewish elders deigned to kill the son of God, they stood upon their pride as bureaucrats and theologians and sinned against God

3. hubris shows up in one of Christ's prophetic parables about the crucifixion and its effect upon the kingdom (Matthew 22:1-14)

a. it was hubris that allowed them to treat the servants—the prophets and preachers—spitefully and to kill them, but God did not watch idly

b. their arrogance caused them to reject their messiah because he came in the body of a carpenter's son and preached a message of redemption and reconciliation rather than nationalism and warfare (John 7:40-52)

4. arrogance and insolence—hubris—can infect your heart and cause you to give up the humility that is necessary to bow before the Lord and to become his servant

Conclusion

Hubris, or extreme pride, will certainly precede a fall and bring man his just desserts.

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Christos*, a word that has become the surname of Jesus of Nazareth, but which originally has attachment to his role as God's anointed savior of mankind and the king of the church.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word Χριστός (Strong's #5547, *Christos*, pr. khris-tos')⁵²
2. *Christos* is an adjective form of the verb *Chrio* (5548), which means "to anoint"⁵³
3. according to Thayer, the idea is "consecrating Jesus to the Messianic office, and furnishing him with the necessary powers for its administration"⁵⁴

B. Translated Words

1. *Christos* appears 569 times in the King James Bible and 531 times in the New American Standard Bible, and is usually transliterated "Christ," but on a few occasions is translated "Messiah" instead
2. transliteration is sometimes lazy and other times it is cowardly, but what the Holy Spirit was saying about Jesus of Nazareth was that he was God's anointed and Israel's long-awaited Messiah

C. Word Picture

1. the word picture of *Christos* is entirely royal in nature, with the idea of anointing Jesus and authorizing him to reign over his kingdom as its sole monarch
2. *Christos* becomes by sheer use a kind of surname for our Lord, but its real force is in its meaning—Jesus the anointed king

II. Some Applications

A. Royalty

1. the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, which was made about 200 years before the time of Christ, and which therefore provides important communication and instruction for Gentile Christians and students of the Scriptures in the early centuries of the church
2. the Septuagint makes the case for a coming Messiah, using the word *Christos* to refer to him prophetically in a vein similar to that of the patriarchs and monarchs
 - a. Psalm 105 uses the same term that applies to Jesus, but in a plurality of special people whom God intended to protect (Psalm 105:12-15)
 - b. the singular form was frequently used to refer to the sitting king of Israel (First Samuel 2:10, 35)
 - c. *Christos* is even used once to refer to a foreign king whom God was raising up for his eternal purposes (Isaiah 45:1-4)

B. Jesus is the Messiah

1. it is interesting that the phrase ο Χριστος is not used of the prophesied Messiah anywhere in the Old Testament, but first appears in the apocryphal Book of Enoch (48:10, 52:4)
2. the collection of messianic psalms, however, do point to a special king and an anointed messiah who would go beyond the exploits of Moses, Gideon and even King David (Psalm 2:1-6)
 - a. the prophecies of hope and expectation gather around him as clues are given regarding the place, era and miraculous circumstances of his birth
 - b. when Paul went on trial for proclaiming Jesus to be the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies, he said, "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain" (Acts 28:20).
3. the identity of Jesus as God's anointed was a matter of great debate in the first century
 - a. Peter confessed his belief (Matthew 16:13-16)
 - b. the high priest prejudicially questioned Jesus about it (Matthew 26:62-68)
 - c. one of the criminals who hung beside him mocked the notion (Luke 23:36-43)

4. the popular notion had always held that the Christ would marshal together the Jewish armies and lead a revolt against Rome and against all Gentiles, expelling them from the borders of Israel and reasserting the prominence and independence of God's kingdom, but that was never really the plan

5. the Christ came to lead a rebellion against a greater enemy, the devil, and to emancipate a wider swath of humanity through his redeeming sacrifice (Luke 24:13-27)

C. Anointing

1. anointing is usually associated with one of two actions

a. the application of water or medicine to someone who is dirty or injured (see Matthew 6:17, Mark 16:1, Luke 7:46, Revelation 3:18, James 5:14)

b. the ceremonial appointment of someone to a particular office (see Exodus 28:41)

2. figuratively, though, anointing becomes attached to the reception of the Holy Spirit when one is born again of water and the spirit (First John 2:18-27)

3. exhibiting anointment is imitating the character of Christ (Romans 8:8-11 and Ephesians 3:14-19)

D. False Christs

1. John mentioned the presence of antichrists, a rather large population of people who deny the lordship of Jesus Christ and seek to undo his influence

2. Jesus likewise warned of false christs (Matthew 24:23-27)

3. throughout the last 2500 years, many have come claiming to be the Christ, but only one of them died and was resurrected and he is our Christ, or anointed king

Conclusion

Word Study of Charisma

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Charisma*, a word that basically means gift, but which becomes theologically important as it touches on divinely-given miraculous abilities and the gift of eternal life itself.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word χάρισμα (Strong's #5486, *Charisma*, pr. khar'-is-mah)⁵⁵
2. *Charisma* is a neuter noun form of the verb *Charizomai* (5486), which means "to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favour to, gratify"⁵⁶
3. according to Barclay, *Charisma* "basically means 'a gift'"⁵⁷
4. Thayer defines the word as
 - a. "a favour with which one receives without any merit of his own
 - b. "the gift of divine grace
 - c. "the gift of faith, knowledge, holiness, virtue
 - d. "the economy of divine grace, by which the pardon of sin and eternal salvation is appointed to sinners in consideration of the merits of Christ laid hold of by faith
 - e. "grace or gifts denoting extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating on their souls by the Holy Spirit"⁵⁸

B. Translated Words

1. *Charisma* appears 17 times in the King James Bible and New American Standard Bibles, and is gift or free gift in the former and favor, free gift, gift, gifts or spiritual gift in the latter
2. the gift can have reference to any subject of favor, miraculous gifts or even eternal life

C. Word Picture

1. the word picture of *Charisma* is a unique one, because although its English counterpart is quite common, the Greek word is not, being used at least once in secular literature to describe property gained by gift (*apo charismatos*) as opposed to that gained by purchase (*apo agorasias*)
2. Barclay writes, "The whole basic idea of the word is that of a free and undeserved gift, of something given to a man unearned and unmerited, something which comes from God's grace and which could never have been achieved or attained or possessed by a man's own effort" (63).⁵⁹
3. Paul's letter to the Romans shows the contrast between *Charisma*—a free gift of grace—and a worker's earned wages (Romans 6:20-23)
 - a. the Greek word rendered wages is ὀψώνιον (*Opsonion*), which means "a soldier's pay, allowance ... that part of the soldier's support given in place of pay [i.e. rations] and the money in which he is paid ... metaphorically, wages: hire or pay of sin"⁶⁰
 - b. Barclay says that it "literally means 'money to buy cooked meat'" (63)⁶¹; the point is that if we had received the pay we earned, we would have died for our sins
 - c. *Charisma*, however, is also a military word for the emperor's grant of free money to his troops upon some special occasion and which was not part of their *Opsonion*, or normal wages; "they got it unearned out of the goodness of the emperor's heart"⁶²
4. Wuest (pr. Weest) comments, "Sin pays its wages in full with no cut. But eternal life is God's gift (*charmisma*), not wages" (365).⁶³

II. Some Applications

A. God's Mercy

1. all this word imagery is mostly indicative of the grace of God, clearly a free gift of eternal life which no sinner could ever possibly merit, regardless of his best efforts at personal redemption and moral balancing (Romans 5:12-16)
2. although God's mercy is not and cannot be earned, it does not follow that it is fully universal or

unconditional—rather, faith and all that word encompasses stand in between the sinner and God’s ultimate *Charisma* (Romans 6:17-18)

3. the futility of man’s efforts either at sinless perfection or personal redemption point out the requirement of divine grace and the acceptability of a submissive human response (Ephesians 2:8-10)

4. salvation remains a gift because it never becomes a matter of pride or merit (Luke 17:6-10)

B. Miraculous Abilities

1. in the first century, when leather-bound Bibles did not exist and the New Testament was only in the process of formation, God found that the gospel of eternal life required the accompanying confirmation of supernatural acts like tongues speaking, healing and prophecy, and these abilities became gifts that he endowed certain saints to perform

2. Paul lists them in First Corinthians chapter 12, arguing that, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” and that “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (4-7)

3. the point of any gift that God gives us is the sharing of it with others—showing that we have learned humility by the price paid to redeem us (Romans 12:6-8)

C. Natural Endowments

1. today, we do not boast supernatural gifts, but continue to enjoy certain natural endowments that are just as much divine gifts, even if they lack the wonder of the former abilities (First Peter 4:10-11)

2. Paul spoke of his ability to remain celibate as a “gift from God,” liberating him to preach without concern for a family of his own (see First Corinthians 7:7)

3. good stewardship of our gifts mandates that we use them, increase them and make them profitable beyond our own pride

4. one of these natural gifts is the opportunity that a few gain to minister to the church before God (First Timothy 4:12-16, Second Timothy 1:3-7)

D. Graceful Attitude

1. the reception of God’s grace should engender humility and forbearance on the part of the forgiven sinner who learns to look at his neighbors in a more merciful light because of the grace God has shown him (Colossians 3:12-14)

2. Paul wished to visit the Roman congregation to “impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established” (1:11)

3. this is another part of God’s *Charisma* toward us—an altered attitude that is more patient toward others because it has been humbled at the cross (First Corinthians 1:4-9)

4. the Corinthians struggled much with this because they fell into the habit of seeing service in God’s church as an arena of competition where personal pride could be tended (First Corinthians 12:27-13:8)

Conclusion

A charismatic person is one who is so gifted that others are drawn to him because of his abilities and personality. With our gifts, we are more trying to draw people to the Lord, that they might receive the ultimate gift—eternal life.

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Aionios*, a word that means forever.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word αἰώνιος (Strong's #166, *Aionios*, pr. ahee-o'-nee-os)⁶⁴
2. *Aionios* is an adjective form of the noun *Aion* (165), which means “for ever, an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity ... the worlds, universe ... period of time, age”⁶⁵
3. according to Barclay, *Aionios* “is a strange word, with a sense of mystery in it”⁶⁶
4. Thayer defines the word as
 - a. “without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be
 - b. “without beginning
 - c. “without end, never to cease, everlasting”⁶⁷

B. Translated Words

1. *Aionios* appears 71 times in the King James Bible and three fewer in the New American Standard Bible, and is translated as eternal, everlasting, for ever, or since the world began the world began
2. Barclay notes three uses in classical Greek—a lifetime, age or generation, and a very long space of time

C. Word Picture

1. the word picture of *Aionios* is one of permanence and by the time of Christ, it had come to be associated with the emperor's power and to be defined as “a state wherein the horizon is not in view,” according to Milligan. *Aionios* becomes the word of far distances, the word of eternities, the word which transcends time.⁶⁸
2. it was Plato, however, whom Barclay credits either with coining the word or at least giving it a sense of mystery by contrasting it with the concept of time as a measurement
3. Plato used it “to denote that which has neither beginning nor end, and that is subject to neither change nor decay, that which is above time, but of which time is a moving image.”⁶⁹

II. Some Applications

A. Eternality of the Godhood

1. this view of eternality naturally begins with God, who is above and beyond time and thus occupies eternity as one who has always existed and is without beginning or end (Psalm 102:24-27)
2. Genesis 1:1 begins with the understanding that the Creator existed before creation, but nothing is ever said of where he came from and this is the gap in every naturalistic explanation of the origin of the universe as well; even if your theory traces the world back to a big bang or something else, where did that matter come from?
 - a. the Bible tries to answer that question simply by attributing eternality to an everlasting God who introduced himself to Moses simply as the I AM (see Genesis 21:33 and Exodus 3:15)
 - b. he is the Lord who “will reign forever and ever” (Exodus 15:18)
3. in spite of being identified as his son, Jesus the Christ is also credited with an eternal nature (John 1:1-5, 14-18)
 - a. he answered his critics by saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58)
 - b. by associating himself so closely with Jehovah, John reasoned that he was “making himself equal with God” (John 5:18)
 - c. he is inferior in no way to his father, save for the frailty of human flesh that he willingly endured (Colossians 2:8-10); he is the true God and eternal life” (First John 5:20).
4. likewise, the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhood, is described as being eternal in nature (see Hebrews 9:14)

B. Eternal Life

1. eternal life, not in a corrupted earth, but with God, is the goal and task of every person whom he creates
 - a. Jesus came to “save his people from their sins,” “that they may have life and have it abundantly” (see Matthew 1:21, John 10:10)
 - b. faith in Christ as the Messiah becomes the decisive question as to whether one will enjoy eternal life or not—an obedient, trusting faith, that is (Matthew 25:31-34, 46)
2. our hope and salvation in Christ Jesus are eternal and everlasting, not just enduring for an age or governing us as we continue to age and decay, but in clear defiance of time altogether (see Titus 3:7 and Second Timothy 2:10)
 - a. the contrast is very obvious whenever Paul talks about his future glory and present difficulties (Second Corinthians 4:13-5:1)
 - b. when it comes to eternal life, the only enduring involved is in this life that prepares us for eternity (First Peter 5:6-10 and First Timothy 6:11-12)
3. eternal life is a gift of God, according to Romans 6:23, and is thus nothing that we deserve, regardless of our own meager efforts, for without Christ Jesus, our Lord, we would be presently and eternally hopeless (see also First John 5:11)
 - a. it is much safer to trust in God’s dependability than our own anyway, for his grace answers when we fail and repent, “And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life” (First John 2:25).
 - b. Peter acknowledged that Jesus was the anointed and had the sanctifying words of eternal life (John 6:66) and our own hold on the everlasting is bound up in that same good confession (Hebrews 5:8-9)

C. Eternal Torment

1. on the other side of the question of eternity is the matter of eternal torment, which is just as enduring as eternal life is for the righteous, and rooted not only in disbelief, but also in disobedience (Second Thessalonians 1:5-10)
2. many presume that it would be unjust for God to sentence any of his creatures to such doom and yet they must ignore the clear warnings of Scripture to get them there (Romans 2:1-11)
3. Hell is described as a place of wailing and gnashing teeth, of outer darkness and separation from God and good people, and it is just as eternal as Heaven is for the redeemed
 - a. blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, that is, the rejection of his testimony, is an “eternal sin,” unforgivable because it prevents the application of grace to one’s account (see Mark 3:29)
 - b. God’s judgment of sin is said to be “a punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 7; see also Hebrews 6:2)
4. some would take solace in the knowledge that God’s punishment was only swift and temporary, and they would risk their souls in the process and many would be lost, but Hell is as everlasting as Heaven and the stakes are just that high

Conclusion

This everlasting word is the one that matters so much to us as we contemplate an existence beyond this life and this temporary world.

Word Study of Pleonexia

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine *Pleonexia*, “a word which the New Testament again and again unsparingly condemns,” according to William Barclay.⁷⁰

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word is *πλεονεξία* (Strong’s #4124, *Pleonexia*, pr. pleh-on-ex-ee'-ah)⁷¹
2. *Pleonexia* is a feminine noun form of the noun *Pleonektes* (4123), which means “one eager to have more, esp. what belongs to others ... greedy of gain, covetous”⁷²
3. according to Barclay, *Pleonexia* “has a certain basic idea behind it which none of the translations wholly bring out, because it cannot be brought out in any one word” (233).
4. Thayer defines the word as “greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice” but Barclay adds the description of “an arrogant greediness.”

B. Translated Words

1. *Pleonexia* appears 10 times each in the King James and New American Standard Bibles, and is translated as covetous practice, covetousness and greediness in the former and covetousness, deeds of coveting, greed and greediness in the latter
2. we might be persuaded to limit this word to the simple greed that we see at work when people yearn to get ahead and define happiness in terms of dollars and cents, but the Greek carries with it something more sinister—“the spirit which tries to take advantage of its fellow-men,” (Barclay)

C. Word Picture

1. the word picture of *Pleonexia* is one of selfishness and dishonesty, especially as it touches on money; “The corresponding verb, *pleonektein*, means ‘to defraud’ or ‘overreach’” (Barclay).
2. this is greed gone beyond dreaming and scheming to the point of taking advantage and using methods that are dishonest and unfair to gain property and position; words like injustice, violence, rapacity and cupidity are attached to *Pleonexia*
3. “By the Latin moralists it is defined as *amor sceleratus habendi*, ‘the accursed love of possessing’” (Barclay 234).

II. Some Applications

A. Sin of the World

1. *Pleonexia* is the precise opposite of the spirit that God tries to impress upon his children; it is a self-serving, self-defeating, society-infecting disposition that acts upon nothing more than instinct rather than intellect
2. *Pleonexia* in the Christian is evidence of a very incomplete conversion, for he is one whose appetites are unchecked and who lusts and drools over things his spirit cannot handle (Romans 1:28-2:3)
3. this was the attitude that Jesus encountered in two brothers who were bickering over an inheritance, and the lesson the Lord taught them resonates through the ages (Luke 12:13-15)
4. the spirit of *Pleonexia* is one of greed and lust, which is fully willing to defraud others; it is the opposite of the Golden Rule of Christianity that holds that one should do to others as he would like them to do to him (Romans 8:5-8)

B. Injustice

1. indeed, one overtaken with unbridled *Pleonexia* is willing to create injustices to satisfy his appetite for carnal wealth; Christians are not (First Thessalonians 2:4-5)
2. beyond empty flattery, a greedy person will also resort to deception to succeed (First Peter 2:1-3)
3. here is the man—perhaps even a nominal Christian—who is willing to use his position to take advantage of the very people he ought to be serving, in order to satisfy his flesh
 - a. perhaps he is an elder who abuses his oversight or a minister who abuses his access and

relationships with the members or a deacon who takes advantage of the trust put in him

b. more often than not, the three commodities at play here are pride, money and sex and churches have not proven to be immune to their leaders taking improper advantage of their positions to explore their selfish, carnal passions for each (see also First Thessalonians 4:6)

4. Paul chastised the Corinthian brethren, saying, “But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers” (First Corinthians 6:8)!

C. Idolatry of Materialism

1. *Pleonexia* is often the subtle idolatry of materialism, sanctioned by societies throughout history, but anathema to God throughout time (Colossians 3:5-7)

2. it is amazing the lengths that people will go to get ahead financially, the people and laws they will trample to get where they want to be

3. even disciples of Christ will cut corners—cheating on their taxes, using software without paying for it, photocopying class material they didn’t buy, and so on

4. *Pleonexia* pretends that nobody gets hurt and doesn’t much care if some do, and it is an attitude that will close the gates of heaven on somebody (First Timothy 6:9-11)

D. Sexual Sin

1. the unseemly other side of *Pleonexia* is the unchecked hunger for sexual satisfaction that we see all over the place in our country, even among pastors and priests (Mark 7:20-23)

2. Barclay writes, “Here is the very essence of the word. The essence is not the sexual sin. The essence is the desire to have what is forbidden, the desire to take what should not be taken, the giving of rein to appetites and desires which are against the laws of God and man” (234).

3. these are the people who cannot resist the urge to stare at pornography, to contemplate fornication, to fantasize about evil acts, and who, given the opportunity, will do the unclean thing every time (Ephesians 4:17-20, 5:3)

4. they have “eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children” (Second Peter 2:14)

Conclusion

Every materialistic televangelist and mega-church pastor is infected with *Pleonexia*. Every pastor and priest that defiles an altar boy or a naive, impressionable teenage female or a middle-age housewife seeking martial counsel is overcome with *Pleonexia*. It can be a threat to all of us if we fail to check our passions and learn better ambitions.

Word Study of *Presbuteros*, *Episkopos* and *Poimen*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine three related Greek words: *Presbuteros*, *Episkopos* and *Poimen*, which all have to do with the oversight of local churches of Christ.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the first Greek word is πρεσβύτερος (Strong's #4245, *Presbuteros*, pr. pres-boo'-ter-os)⁷³
 - a. Thayer defines *Presbuteros* as an adjective meaning, "elder, of age, advanced in life ... among the Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (or churches) ... The New Testament uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably" (Ibid)
 - b. the word thus has a common and specialized meaning—commonly, it simply means older, but in the church, it also has reference to an office within the local congregation
2. the second Greek word is ἐπίσκοπος (Strong's #1985, *Episkopos*, pr. ep-is'-kop-os)⁷⁴
 - a. Thayer defines *Episkopos* as a masculine noun meaning, "an overseer ... a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent" (Ibid)
 - b. *Episkopos* is derived from a compound of Greek words for observer (-skopos) and upon (epi-)
3. the third Greek word is ποιμήν (Strong's #4166, *Poimen*, pr. poy-mane')⁷⁵
 - a. Thayer defines *Poimen* as a masculine noun, indicating "a herdsman, especially a shepherd ... metaphorically ... the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly: so of Christ the Head of the church ... of the overseers of the Christian assemblies" (Ibid).
 - b. a verb form of the word also exists—*Poimaino*, "to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep"

B. Translated Words

1. *Presbuteros* appears sixty-seven times in the King James and New American Standard Bibles, always translated with the idea of older or elder
2. *Episkopos* shows up five times in the New Testament and is translated bishop and overseer in the former, guardian or overseer in the latter
3. *Poimen* appears eighteen times in both prominent versions, always translated shepherd or pastor, with reference to actual shepherds, to Christ, or to church officers

C. Word Picture

1. the three words are not necessarily related in the Greek language, but become associated through their interchangeable use in the New Testament and the church it describes
2. from the three Greek words, we get six English translations that are frequently used interchangeably and with reference to just one office in the New Testament church
 - a. elder and presbyter (from *Presbuteros*), bishop and overseer (from *Episkopos*), shepherd and pastor (from *Poimen*)
 - b. we learn that *Presbuteros* and *Episkopos* are synonymous by reading Paul's descriptions of the qualities necessary to the office (Titus 1:5-7), thus showing that an elder, presbyter, bishop and overseer are identical
 - c. we gain further insight by considering Paul's discussion with the elders from Ephesus (Acts 20:17, 28), combining *Presbuteros* (verse 17) with *Episkopos* (verse 28) and even *Poimainein* ("to shepherd")
 - d. finally, Peter uses all three Greek words in his admonitions to them (First Peter 5:1-3)
3. the shocking truth we discover is that the job of pastoring went not to the preacher or a man appointed to work with singles or the youth, but to the elders
4. moreover, the term bishop did not have reference to a mythical office of regional oversight, but to the same group of men who oversaw individual local churches where they worshipped
5. the practices of Protestantism and Catholicism stand opposed to the pattern set forth in the New Testament for the organization of the local congregation, its autonomy and identity

II. Some Applications

A. Experience

1. the concept of experience is inherent to the definition of at least one of the terms and certainly to the office itself

2. to be appointed to the presbytery, one must have attained to a level in life at which he can reasonably be considered an “elder” among the tribe, that is, an older member

a. the word is not eldest, requiring us to appoint the oldest men regardless of ability or spirituality, but it is a relative term that only denotes he would not be among the younger portion

b. there is no minimum age requirement or precise measurement of this quality, but the church will be able to agree upon any candidate’s acceptability regarding it

3. age is not so much the defining factor, but maturity—especially spiritual—might be (First Timothy 3:1-7)

a. his marital status and successful child-rearing will only come with a certain amount of age
b. too, many of the personal qualities necessary to the work will be the product of much spiritual growth

c. but it the warning that appointing a recent convert, or novice, that reminds us of the importance of spiritual maturity and experience

4. it is sad that we seem to be having more difficulty today finding qualified elders than the apostles had in the first century, even among very new congregations (Acts 14:21-23)

B. Oversight

1. naturally, those appointed as official elders are responsible for the oversight of the church, a function ecclesiastically expressed by the term “bishop,” which has been warped far beyond its original definition

2. as Peter wrote his fellow elders, the bishops are responsible for overseeing the churches of which they are members, not other congregations or the universal church, which is solely in the authority of Christ, the Chief Shepherd (see also Hebrews 13:20)

3. Peter designates the manner of oversight to be leadership by example rather than by lordship or compulsion

a. Clinton Hamilton comments upon the verse: “Elders in the discharge of their duties in relation to the brethren are not to be autocratic or ‘bossy.’ There could well be the tendency of elders to want to dominate or control with ‘an iron hand’” (294).⁷⁶

b. in *Scriptural Elders and Deacons*, H.E. Phillips wrote, “A shepherd sets the example for the sheep to follow. He goes before them and leads rather than drives” (193)

1. he references the words of Jesus in John 10:4: “When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”

2. Phillips continues, “The elders are not to be ‘lords’ in their rule, as a dictator or pope” and later writes, “The most effective way of leading people is to be an example to them. That was the course that Christ and his apostles took. Example has a powerful drawing element” (194).⁷⁷

4. the Hebrew writer seemed to have this mind, too (Hebrews 13:7, 17)

C. Shepherding

1. as Christ is the Chief Shepherd, local bishops serve as pastors, or shepherds, of the flocks of which they themselves are also members

2. Thayer wrote, “The tasks of a Near Eastern shepherd were: to watch for enemies trying to attack the sheep ... to defend the sheep from attackers ... to heal the wounded and sick sheep ... to find and save lost or trapped sheep ... to love them, sharing their lives and so earning their trust.”⁷⁸

a. their work is to protect the flock (Acts 20:28-31)

b. wolves often come in sheep’s clothing (Titus 1:7-11)

c. they must appoint teachers who will feed the flock (First Timothy 4:13-16)

Conclusion

In these ways, the office, authority and function of the overseers, or elders, or bishops, or pastors are distinct from those of the evangelist, or preacher, or minister (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Introduction

Our Greek word study this time focuses on what William Barclay called the greatest of the virtues—*agape*, or love.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word ἀγάπη (Strong's #26, *Agape*, pr. ag-ah'-pay)⁷⁹
2. *Agape* is a feminine noun defined by Thayer as “brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence ... love feasts”⁸⁰
3. it is derived from ἀγαπάω (Strong's #25, *Agapao*, pr. ag-ap-ah'-o), defined “of persons ... to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly ... of things ... to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing”⁸¹
4. *Agape* is one of at least four Greek words that express the concept of love in very distinct ways
 - a. eros describes love between the sexes, or physical love
 - b. storge has to do with family affection
 - c. philia is the word for something cherished like a friend or even a spouse
 - d. *agape* is by far the most common word for love in the New Testament and indicates a nobler sense of the idea

B. Translated Words

1. *Agape* appears 116 times in the King James Bible and is usually translated simply as love, but is also rendered charity on a number of occasions as well as dear and beloved
2. charity is now an antiquated synonym for love, but shows up most notably in First Corinthians 13:13

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay suggests that the reason “Christian thought fastened on *agape* is that *agape* demands the exercise of the whole man” and love extended beyond our own even to the whole world, including our enemies
2. Christ-like love is an achievement beyond anything natural, he writes
3. “It is not simply an emotion which rises unbidden in our hearts; it is a principle by which we deliberately live ... it is a conquest, a victory, and achievement” (21)⁸²

II. Some Applications

A. A Product of the Spirit

1. the kind of love that goes beyond a natural love of self and well-wishers, and even beyond a supernatural love for God is the sort that is ready to show affection and consideration to everyone, even one's enemies because it is a product of the spirit (Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23)
2. every other virtue is a subset of love, which also serves to bind goodness together and make it effective and powerful (Ephesians 5:1-2)
3. love becomes the defining element of a life that is truly converted to Christ; as Paul told the Corinthians, “Let all that you do be done with love” (First Corinthians 16:14).
4. the active portion of *agape* is seen in the biblical expression, “labor of love” used in First Thessalonians 1:3 because real love goes beyond a word or an emotion to behavior that breathes consideration even more than affection (Revelation 2:19)

B. Tough Love

1. sometimes love has to be tough as well, tough enough to extend and withstand correction and discipline (Hebrews 12:4-7)
2. it is not loving to allow someone to drift into danger or soul-damning error just to avoid a conflict or confrontation (Galatians 6:1-5)
3. Paul instructed the Corinthians to withdraw from a brother who was guilty of sexual and

marital sin, and the Thessalonians to withdraw from lazy members, not because he wanted to engender hatred, but faithfulness and *agape* love has the strength and courage to take that risk (James 5:19-20); see also First Corinthians 5:1-13 and Second Thessalonians 3:1-15)

C. Faith, Hope and Charity

1. so many things threaten our *agape* love for one another, especially our own sense of pride and self-preservation
2. that is what hindered the Corinthian church in their spiritual blessings (First Corinthians 12:1, 4-7, 18-19, 29-31)
3. the next chapter defines that more excellent way (First Corinthians 13:1-3, 8-13)
4. the following chapter concludes with an admonition not to use gifts against one another (First Corinthians 14:1, 20)

Conclusion

Everyone is capable of certain kinds of love, but only the disciples of Christ are able to love as selflessly and openly as *Agape* suggests.

Introduction

Baptizo is a controversial word from the Greek language, not in its original tongue where its meaning is evident, but within Christianity where its execution is a matter of theological disagreement. How literally should the word be rendered, for instance? *Baptizo* is a word that needs to be translated, rather than transliterated, and applied accordingly.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word βαπτίζω (Strong's #907, *Baptizo*, pr. bap-tid'-zo)⁸³
2. *Baptizo* is a verb defined by Thayer as "to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk) ... to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe ... to overwhelm"⁸⁴
3. it is derived from βάπτω (Strong's #911, *Bapto*, pr. bap'-to), defined "to dip, dip in, immerse ... to dip into dye, to dye, colour"⁸⁵

B. Translated Words

1. *Baptizo* appears 80 times in the King James Bible and is only actually translated into English twice—as "wash" with reference to hands or cups; otherwise, the word "baptize" was invented so as to obscure immersion as the true meaning and mode of the New Testament act of conversion
2. no major translation goes any further in using an existing and more descriptive English word to communicate the intent of the Holy Spirit in choosing *Baptizo* over other Greek words

C. Word Picture

1. Thayer comments, "The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change."⁸⁶
2. the Greek word, then, has no inherent religious significance, and only gains a place in Christianity by its use in immersing people literally into water and figuratively into Christ and the church
3. the whole idea of ritual immersion originated not in Christianity, nor even in the New Testament, but in the Jewish rules for moral purification from uncleanness
 - a. several centuries before Christ came, many Jews came to live far from Jerusalem and the Gentiles with whom they made contact sometimes wanted to be converted to Jehovah
 - b. "[T]he required public repentance and acceptance of Mosaic Law was accompanied by immersion in water, symbolizing and effecting religious, moral, and ritual cleansing from the defilements of paganism."⁸⁷
 - c. this water ritual was associated with the passage of the Exodus pilgrims through the Red Sea and into Canaan (First Corinthians 10:1-4)
4. this is how proselytes could be made, with a focus on repentance and moral washing from filth and idolatry that God would not countenance

II. Some Applications

A. Why John Baptized

1. baptism becomes a part of the ministry of Christ through the work of his forerunner and cousin, John, who did so much of it that he became known to history as, "The Baptist"—really, "the immerser" (Matthew 3:1-12)
2. his baptism was no mere ritual or initiation, but was an act of submission signifying conversion and the hope for mercy
3. imagine his surprise when Jesus came also to be baptized (Matthew 3:13-17)
 - a. Jesus was baptized to show submissiveness to his own law, even though he had no sins of

his own to plead for (First Peter 2:22-25)

- b. thus did Jesus become “the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Hebrews 5:9)
4. John’s baptism was not intended to be permanent, lasting only until Christ was glorified, but it took time for that part of the message to be broadcast (Acts 18:24-26)
 - a. those who had submitted to a defunct, now unauthorized mode of baptism, were not permitted to remain as they were either (Acts 19:1-7)
 - b. this even also serves to distinguish between water and Holy Spirit baptisms as well

B. The Great Commission

1. so powerful was the act and image of baptism that it was made a permanent part of the work of Christ through the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - a. Jesus also reasoned that, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).
 - b. many have tried to escape the necessity by focusing upon the negative in that passage, but the truly soft-hearted will be just as impressed with the positive requirement to believe, be baptized and gain salvation
2. baptism is immediately called into effect on the day of Pentecost when the church was established (Acts 2:36-47)
3. the apostles carried out their commission, taking the gospel into the whole of their world within just a few decades, even into Gentile and heathen lands
 - a. Samaritans (Acts 8:12-13)
 - b. an African (Acts 8:36-39)
 - c. Greeks: “many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8)
 - d. even one persecutor himself (Acts 22:12-16)

C. One Baptism

1. with John’s baptism in the past, it became evident that there was one baptism that every person could share in—the baptism of water and the Spirit authorized by Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6)
2. this is the baptism—immersion in water for the remission of sins—that acquaints the sinner with the blood of sacrifice (Romans 6:1-7)
3. this baptism imitates the death, burial and resurrection of the savior and puts the penitent into the body of the redeemer (Galatians 3:27)

D. Holy Ghost

1. but what of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5)
 - a. this command and promise was issued to the apostles, who were soon endowed with the supernatural ability to speak in unstudied languages (Acts 2:1-4)
 - b. they used this newfound ability to preach the gospel to Jews gathered in Jerusalem for the holiday from all over the world
2. not every believer received such abilities, nor did any but the Holy Spirit and the apostles possess the authority to pass them along (Acts 8:14-18, 19:3-4)
3. we only witness Holy Spirit baptism once more in the New Testament, to show divine approval of Peter’s ministry to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48, 11:1-4, 15-17)
4. because it can still be said that the Spirit dwells in every believer as an earnest of redemption, “we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (First Corinthians 12:13; see also First Corinthians 3:16)

Conclusion

Baptism is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins, not a sprinkling or pouring and not in some other medium, and not for any other, lesser purpose. It is a requirement, not of man, but of God through his grace, not man’s merit.

Word Study of *Paidagogos*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

Barclay calls *Paidagogos* “the guardian of childhood’s days” and that surely is a sweet sentiment. *Paidagogos* calls to mind, though, a guardian who tutors and protects a child as he works his way toward maturity.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word παιδαγωγός (Strong’s #3807, *Paidagogos*, pr. pahee-dag-o-gos)⁸⁸
2. *Paidagogos* is a masculine noun defined by Thayer as “a tutor i.e. a guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood.”⁸⁹
3. it is derived from a compound of παις (Strong’s #3816, *Pais*, pr. pahece), defined “a child, boy or girl”⁹⁰ and a reduplicated form of ἄγω (Strong’s #71, *Agō*, pr. ag'-o), defined “to lead”⁹¹

B. Translated Words

1. it appears three times in the King James Bible and is translated instructor or schoolmaster
2. in the New American Standard, it is translated tutor, but in the English Standard Version, the word “guardian” appears instead

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay writes, “Up to the age of seven the Greek boy was almost exclusively in his mother’s charge. But even then, if there was a *paidagogos* in the household, he had his say ... It was when he went to school that the *paidagogos* really took over the management of the boy and retained it till the boy was eighteen” (206).⁹²
 - a. the *paidagogos* was not so much a teacher as a guardian, watching over the boy so that he would be safe and behave responsibly and modestly
 - b. “K.J. Freeman says of the *paidagogos* that he was ‘a mixture of nurse, footman, chaperon and tutor’” (Barclay 207).⁹³
2. the attitude of a good *paidagogos* is reflected in his understanding of his duty to the boy in his charge: “My duty is to make the good pleasant to the boy” (Barclay 208).⁹⁴
3. the work of the *paidagogos* was necessarily and ideally temporary; “In any event the *paidagogos* existed for no other reason than to make his charge independent of his care” (Barclay 209).

II. Some Applications

A. They Who Got Us Here

1. Paul thought of himself as a *paidagogos* to many Christians in places where he had sowed the gospel seed, including Corinth (Acts 18:1-2, 7-11)
 - a. Paul would later write the Corinthians about the sweetness of that relationship to him (First Corinthians 4:14-21)
 - b. Paul felt as though he had begotten them in the faith and had the authority to chastise them when they strayed as well
2. it is good that we remember the people who helped instill faith in us, especially if their faith is still such that we can imitate it
 - a. Timothy had Paul as well as his mother and grandmother to look to (Second Timothy 1:3-5; see also First Timothy 1:2)
 - b. maybe it was a parent or a friend or a preacher who introduced you to Christ; if that person is just, his hope was always that your faith would blossom so that it could stand on its own with Christ
3. Paul told the Thessalonians to respect their *paidagogos* in the faith: “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (First Thessalonians 5:12-13).
 - a. still, we must be astute enough to recognize that all such people are fallible and that we

cannot follow them blindly (First Corinthians 4:1-7)

b. while we should be grateful to our teachers, we should never become blindly loyal

B. The Law That Held Us Wards in Discipline

1. that idea is applied, not to a man, but to the Law of Moses, in Paul's letter to Galatia (Galatians 3:19-27)

a. Moffatt translates verse 24 to indicate "the law held us as wards in discipline" (Barclay 206)⁹⁵

b. this verse, of course, applies mostly to the Jews who had grown up under the law of Moses and who were now confronted with the liberty in Christ, but it came to fit the Gentiles as well, who fell under the influence of those Jews who had trouble giving up the Law

2. like a *paidagogos*, the old law was temporary and for the purpose of guarding its charges until they reached maturity, in this case, with the arrival of the messiah (Galatians 4:1-7)

a. in both cases, the youth was not at liberty from the *paidagogos* until he reached maturity

b. strictness of moral discipline was enforced in both cases by the *paidagogos*

c. freedom and a superior condition arrived as each attained maturity (see Willis 164)⁹⁶

3. the old law was made obsolete by the events at the cross (Ephesians 2:14-16, Colossians 2:11-17)

a. the Judaizing teachers, many believing Pharisees, attempted to resuscitate the Law of Moses and inflict it as a *paidagogos* upon the Gentile brethren, but the Holy Spirit objected

b. blending the two laws was a denial of grace (Galatians 5:1-4)

4. before Jerusalem fell, the Hebrew writer prophesied that, "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" (8:13).

a. the old law was designed to show people their need for a savior and for divine grace upon the soul

b. it was a temporary *paidagogos* and maturity came to the race upon the cross

c. reverting to Moses and the prophets for authority or validation rejects Christ

C. Spiritual Maturity

1. thus the New Testament becomes our guide and stay, the definer of our morals and objectives (First Peter 1:22-2:3)

2. fuller, individual spiritual maturity is now the objective (Second Peter 3:17-18)

3. we must watch lest our morals deteriorate (First Peter 4:1-4)

4. spiritual maturity means constant preparedness (Romans 13:11-14)

Conclusion

Many rejoiced when they realized that they had reached maturity and were no longer under a *paidagogos*. Likewise, we should be glad to enjoy our liberty in Christ.

Introduction

The Greek word *Ekklesia* is a meaningful word to Christians because it is the origin of our word for church, the body of Christ in which we find mercy and fellowship. The word “church,” however hides a deeper meaning behind the Greek compound term.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word ἐκκλησία (Strong’s #1577, *Ekklesia*, pr. ek-klay-see'-ah)⁹⁷
2. *Ekklesia* is a feminine noun defined by Thayer as “a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly”⁹⁸
3. it is derived from a compound of ἐκ (Strong’s #1537, *Ek*, pr. ek), defined “from, out”⁹⁹ and καλέω (Strong’s #2564, *Kaleo*, pr. kal-eh'-o), defined “to call”¹⁰⁰
4. like many sacred words, *Ekklesia* has a common meaning as well as a religious one
 - a. commonly in Greek, *Ekklesia* is “an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating ... the assembly of the Israelites ... any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, tumultuously”¹⁰¹
 - b. “in a Christian sense ... an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting ... a company of Christians, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake ... those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body ... the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth ... the assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven”¹⁰²
5. the word “church” itself comes to us by way of the Middle English *chirche*, from Old English *cirice* and is a transliteration of the Greek κυριακός (*koo-ree-ak-os'*), meaning “belonging to the Lord”¹⁰³

B. Translated Words

1. it appears 118 times in the King James and is translated assembly thrice, church the other 115
2. in the New American Standard, it is translated congregation in three verses (Acts 19:29-41)

C. Word Picture

1. where the English word “church” lacks any obvious connotation, the Greek carries with it the very important notion of being called out (First Peter 2:9)
2. it is surely possible that some people are called by God and even enter the church in some obvious fashion, but never actually get out of the ways of the world
3. our goal is to make certain that we are not simply “in the church,” but that we are just as much “out of the world” or at least its ways (John 15:18-20, 17:6, 11-16)

II. Some Applications

A. Universal

1. religious citizenship is not defined or limited by geographic features or topographic lines, for the Christian’s citizenship transcends the Earth (Philippians 3:20-4:1)
2. this is even true on Earth, of course, where Heaven is represented by Christ’s church—his collection of called-out people, those who responded to his invitation and put aside every other difference to be one people (Colossians 1:18-20, 24)
3. Jesus told the apostles that he planned to build his church and he had in mind that universal association—not a physical structure to replace the temple, or a denominational system to validate disunity, and he built the churches of Christ through his death and resurrection (Ephesians 5:25-27; see also Matthew 16:13-18)
 - a. it is in this sense the church is catholic—universal—but it is only Roman when in Rome
 - b. in the Bible, the universal church has no earthly organization or hierarchy and its sole leader is Christ the Chief Shepherd—no pope, no synod, no diocesan bishoprics
 - c. it is in this sense the Holy Spirit had in mind when he said that there was one faith and one

body of Christ—one church that alone belongs to him (Ephesians 4:4-6, 1:22-23)

B. Congregation

1. the question becomes then, “What is the church made of?”
 - a. local churches, the various denominations, or something else?
 - b. something else—the universal church is composed only of individual Christians
2. the individual Christians then join themselves to local congregations
 - a. after Saul of Tarsus had been converted, he sought to join the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-28); later, when his credentials were more certain, he was able to travel “through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:41)
 - b. membership in a local congregation provides certain blessings, honors and duties that are not otherwise available—mutual edification, discipline and sharing in the work and worship
3. every member of a local church is a saint—a set-apart person (First Corinthians 1:1-3)
 - a. Paul had this in mind when he told the Corinthians in his second letter about his deep and daily “anxiety for all the churches” (11:28)
 - b. because the universal church is never activated or given any cooperative function, the local churches are responsible for seeing to matters of benevolence and evangelism (Philippians 4:14-16)
 - c. local churches, however, are authorized to assist one another in situations of economic hardship (Second Corinthians 8:1-6; see also First Corinthians 16:1-4, Acts 11:28-30)
4. local churches of Christ are addressed in many of Paul’s letters and in the Revelation letters of Christ (chapters 2-3)

C. Denomination

1. division was anathema to the founder of the church and he sought to prevent it through his inspired writers, even though the weakness of men made it all but inevitable
2. unity was the order of the realm—in spite of every other kind of difference
 - a. no Jewish or Gentile church; the races were to unite in Christ (see Galatians 3:27-29)
 - b. no rich church or poor church; the classes were to meet in the middle in Christ (see First Corinthians 11:17-31, James 2:1-9)
 - c. no European or Asian church, but simply the church of Christ
 - d. and there no Sadduceean church, no Pharisaical church, no Zealot church, no Petrine, Apollonian or Pauline church—just the church of Christ, God the son
3. the apostles did not teach their own distinctive doctrines as the sects do today, but taught the same things “everywhere in every church” (First Corinthians 4:17, 7:17, 11:16), “for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints” (First Corinthians 14:33)
4. doctrinal disunity led to problems in Corinth and Galatia and to the rebukes by John, Jude and Jesus in their letters at the end of the New Testament; “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us” (First John 2:19).

D. Building

1. the most common use of the word “church” today is with reference to a building, whether ornate or utilitarian, but that use never appears in God’s word
2. there is, however, a metaphorical building sense in the New Testament (First Peter 2:4-6)
 - a. Paul told the Corinthians, “For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building” (First Corinthians 3:9).
 - b. the Ephesians were a building in the same sense (Ephesians 2:19-22)
3. Paul wrote Timothy a letter so that he could “know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (First Timothy 3:15).
 - a. the church is plainly made of people, not bricks and mortar
 - b. it, not its meeting place, is “the house of God,” (Hebrews 10:21), “For we are the temple of the living God” (Second Corinthians 6:16)
4. like the old temple, the church is a setting of worship—the only sense in which it can be said that we “go to church” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Conclusion

Ekklesia is a beautiful word, but its connotation of “called-out” makes it much more significant.

Word Study of Parakletos

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

Parakletos is the word of the Holy Spirit, word for advocacy, comfort and help.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word παράκλητος (Strong's #3875, *Parakletos*, pr. par-ak'-lay-tos)¹⁰⁴
2. *Parakletos* is a masculine noun defined by Thayer as “summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid”¹⁰⁵
 - a. “one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate
 - b. “one who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor
 1. “of Christ in his exaltation at God's right hand, pleading with God the Father for the pardon of our sins
 2. “in the widest sense, a helper, succourer, aider, assistant of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to a deeper knowledge of the gospel truth, and give them divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom”¹⁰⁶

B. Translated Words

1. *Parakletos* appears five times in the King James and is translated advocate or comforter
2. in the New American Standard, it is also translated Helper four times instead
3. the only New Testament writer to use the word at all is John

C. Word Picture

1. *Parakletos* has proven to be a difficult word to translate, sometimes being rendered Helper, others as Advocate, and still others as Comforter
2. it is a passive word, literally, “one who is called in,” but one with what Barclay calls an “active meaning” (217)¹⁰⁷
3. a summons is made for assistance or help and the *Parakletos* is the one who answers
 - a. the idea in the Greek is not really the same as our concept of comfort, for the comfort is always intended to strengthen rather than simply to console
 - b. it is usually used in Greek in a legal sense; “In Greece the *parakletos* was the friend of the accused person, called in to speak in support of his character” (Barclay 218).
 - c. that is where the idea of an advocate came into the New Testament contexts
4. “But above all *parakalein* is used of exhorting troops who are about to into battle” (Barclay 220) ... “Again and again we find that *parakalein* is the word of the rallying-call; it is the word used of the speeches of leaders and of soldiers who urge each other on” (Barclay 221).

II. Some Applications

A. Christ's Successor Among the Apostles

1. the apostles had spent the better part of three years at the side of Jesus and now he was telling them about his imminent departure; naturally they were despondent
2. Jesus tried to allay their fears of abandonment by promising them another iteration of divine presence, a *parakletos* who would replace him after he ascended into heaven (John 14:15-26)
 - a. this Helper would serve to illuminate their minds, especially when they were on trial for their convictions and the right words were required to form a foundation for the future (see Luke 21:15)
 - b. the Holy Spirit would move the prophets and other inspired people to deliver God's truth to men in a way similar to what Christ had been doing for the last few years (see First Peter 1:21)
3. the presence of the Holy Spirit, in sharing supernatural talents and divine wisdom, would prevent the apostles from becoming spiritual orphans and the church from suffering neglect
4. faithful obedience would be their invitation to the Holy Spirit
 - a. he would teach them all things that pertain to life and godliness and form the faith once for

all delivered to men (John 16:12-15)

b. he would remind them of the things that Jesus had taught while he was with them—things which might not have seemed significant at that moment

B. Witness For Christ

1. like the friend or defender in court, the Holy Spirit of truth would then rise to bear further witness of Christ's true identity (John 15:26-16:11)

2. had Jesus simply remained on Earth, the scheme of salvation would have ended without an atonement for sin, without an invitation at all to Gentiles, without the establishment of a spiritual kingdom of redemption

3. no reservation would have been made in Heaven and all the Father's mansions would have remained unoccupied

4. after Jesus ascended back to Heaven, the Holy Spirit was free to come on the next Pentecost and enable the apostles to speak in tongues and testify by word and power that Jesus had been an authentic king (Romans 5:1-5)

a. their words convicted the worldly of unbelief and sin

b. they proved Jesus a righteous prophet in predicting his own fate and coronation

c. those words doomed the devil to defeat because they led men away from him (Romans 6:16-17)

C. Advocate With The Father

1. John, however, also calls Jesus our *parakletos* with his father (First John 2:1-2)

2. the context is focused upon faithful obedience again, but now with the idea that Jesus himself is our advocate and intercessor in heaven (Hebrews 7:23-28)

3. the Holy Spirit also has a role of advocacy in our behalf (Romans 8:23-28)

4. these advocates help us reach the throne of grace because Jesus came, went away and then sent the Holy Spirit to labor among the apostles and all who believe (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Conclusion

We are so blessed to have friends who will stand behind us when we are accused by the devil and judged by God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are advocates and intercessors in times of need.

Introduction

Parousia is a favorite word of Christians, a word that promises greater glory and reward, but which is sometimes confused by Premillennialism.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word *παρουσία* (Strong's #3952, *Parousia*, pr. par-oo-see'-ah)¹⁰⁸
2. *Parousia* is a feminine noun derived from the present participle of *Pareimi* (pr. par'-i-mee), a Greek compound word which means, "to be by, be at hand, to have arrived, to be present ... to be ready, in store, at command"¹⁰⁹
3. Thayer defines *Parousia* as "presence ... the coming, arrival, advent ... the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God"¹¹⁰

B. Translated Words

1. *Parousia* appears 24 times in the King James Bible and is translated "coming" in all but two of them
2. the other two references use the English word "presence" instead

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay notes that, "The Greek word *parousia* has become naturalized in English as a technical term for the Second Coming of Christ" (222).¹¹¹
2. in fact, one rarely hears the word in conjunction with anything else, even though it has a much broader meaning in the Greek
3. even in the Bible, it is frequently used in a much less noble sense
 - a. "It can be used in such phrases as the 'presence' of friends or the 'presence' of misfortunes" (Barclay 222).
 - b. Paul used *parousia* when he rejoiced at the arrival of his friends, Stephanas and Titus (see First Corinthians 16:17, Second Corinthians 7:6)
 - c. Paul urged the Philippians to be as faithful during his absence from them as they were during his *parousia* (presence, see Philippians 2:12), but the Corinthians mocked his bodily *parousia* as being weak compared to his bold letters from afar (see Second Corinthians 10:10)
4. in Greek, *parousia* is the technical word for the coming of an emperor, king, governor or other dignitary to a town or province
 - a. preparations has to be made, just as today a presidential visit would require security analysis, decorations and a round-up of the usual suspects
 - b. back then, extra taxes were imposed to fund the pageantry as well
5. when Christ and the New Testament writers apply the word to the Messiah, it is with the idea of a royal visitation and preparation is indeed key

II. Some Applications

A. Coming of the Son of Man

1. the Old Testament prophet Zechariah wrote something very curious in his book: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (9:9).
 - a. at least it is curious until one reads of the fulfillment in the life of Jesus the Christ (Matthew 21:1-11)
 - b. Jesus set out to fulfill that prophecy a matter of days before his arrest
2. his *parousia* into Jerusalem foreshadowed his exit—first upon a fatal cross and then, more gloriously, through the clouds back into Heaven
3. from that point, the prediction of a second coming, a renewal of his *parousia*—arrival or

presence—became central to Christian prophecy (Acts 1:6-14)

4. in their initial question, we see again the confused combination of events that the apostles and early disciples struggled to harmonize—the coming of Christ and the restoration of Israel to earthly prominence

a. the same had been discussed during the latter stages of his ministry in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-3)

b. they could not yet imagine the church as a spiritual kingdom, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, but instead anticipated a warrior Christ who would rid Palestine of the heathen, establishing a new earthly Hebrew kingdom

c. the Lord's answer described the coming of the son of Man in typically apocalyptic terms, but with Jerusalem as a target rather than a victor (Matthew 24:15-28)

d. this visitation of judgment upon Jerusalem, however, would not correspond with his second coming, or appearance (Matthew 24:36-44)

B. Preparing for His Arrival

1. with Jerusalem fallen, it is left to Christians since to prepare for the king to return and for the kingdom itself to be presented before him

2. his death, resurrection and ascension provided all the ceremony necessary to a coronation, and the church itself is already his kingdom (Acts 2:29-33)

3. what remains is for that kingdom to be perfected and transported into eternity (First Thessalonians 3:11-13)

a. Paul's letters to Thessalonica reveal that Jesus would never set foot on Earth again, but rather that the redeemed would rise to meet him (First Thessalonians 4:13-17)

b. preparation for that great moment is what motivates us to vigilance and faithfulness (First Thessalonians 5:23-24)

4. our king is coming, but we know not how soon, so we must be prepared (First John 2:28-29)

C. Patience and Hope

1. the promise of our king's second parousia also lends us comfort so that we need not avenge ourselves or hasten the demise of our enemies (James 5:1-8)

a. it can be very tempting to try to help God out by using vigilante tactics against wrongdoers and enemies of the cross, but he does not need that kind of help

b. that is especially true if we are merely avenging wrongs done to us and not others

c. "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Romans 12:19).

2. conversely, waiting on the Lord should inspire us to greater hope (Second Peter 3:1-4, 8-12a)

Conclusion

Parousia is a wonderful and hopeful word, but the kingdom it sometimes is used to describe has already come and we can be among its citizens if we believe and obey its king.

Word Study of *Akoloutheo*

a word study by Jeff S. Smith

Introduction

Akoloutheo is called the disciple's word, because the verb simply means "to follow." Soldiers, students and citizens are all called upon to be content as followers, but nowhere is this more certain than among the followers of Jesus the Christ.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word is ἀκολουθέω (Strong's #190, *Akoloutheo*, pr. ak-ol-oo-theh'-o)¹¹²
2. *Akoloutheo* is a verb derived from *keleuthos*, which means a road¹¹³
3. Thayer defines *Akoloutheo* as "to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant, accompany him ... to join one as a disciple, become or be his disciple ... side with his party"¹¹⁴

B. Translated Words

1. *Akoloutheo* appears 92 times in the King James Bible and is translated "follow," except for one instance of "reach"
2. the New American Standard Bible translates *Akoloutheo* as follow
3. interestingly, *Akoloutheo* only appears about a dozen times outside of the gospel accounts, being used about equally by those four writers, but seldom by anyone else

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay paints a word picture of *Akoloutheo* that reveals its root in following authority
 - a. in Greek, it is used of soldiers following their leader and commander, of a slave attending to his master, of someone following advice, of obeying laws, following the thread of an argument or speech, and of sticking to someone in the hopes of gaining his favor
 - b. "Every one of these usages has light to throw on the Christian life" (Barclay 42).¹¹⁵
2. the word is overwhelmingly employed in the New Testament to refer to discipleship of Jesus Christ
3. initially, we see it used to refer to the many disciples who left their trades and homes to serve as apostles or followers of the savior, especially when invited by a simple, "Follow me" (see Mark 2:14, 1:18; Matthew 4:20, John 1:37, Luke 5:11)
4. truly, each of the classic Greek uses of *Akoloutheo* shows up in discipleship
 - a. Christians are soldiers in a spiritual army, slaves of a heavenly master, dependent upon his counsel and submissive to his will, answerable to his arguments and attached to him with hope of eternal grace
 - b. following, however, loses its true meaning whenever people are Christians in name more than reality—part of a club more than they are actually disciples and followers

II. Some Applications

A. What Following Jesus Involves

1. following Jesus includes counting the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:25-33)
 - a. in fact, there are times when it almost sounds like Jesus is discouraging discipleship for people he recognized as not being ready (Luke 9:57-62)
 - b. there is a danger in going through the motions of accepting discipleship without thoughtful, personal consideration of what it entails—the danger lies in regret and potential apostasy (Second Peter 2:20-22)
2. following Jesus involves sacrifice (Luke 5:1-11)
 - a. the gospel writers repeatedly note what the disciples sacrificed to follow Jesus
 - b. Peter even contemplated the loss when the rich, young ruler proved unwilling to sacrifice his heart's idol (Matthew 19:23-30)
 - c. where discipleship became their full-time jobs, it is ours as well if we allow our convictions to permeate our lives—at work, at play and even at rest
3. following Jesus involves a cross as an act of spiritual and moral surrender (Mark 8:34-38)

- a. Barclay comments, “To follow Jesus may well mean the sacrifice of the pleasures, habits, aims, ambitions which have woven themselves into our lives” (45).¹¹⁶
- b. one must be willing to surrender his conscience to Christ

B. What Following Jesus Promises

1. following Jesus means taking a better, brighter path than any other that is available to the unbeliever (John 8:1-12)
 - a. think about all the false religion and hypocrisy, the wickedness and immorality involved in that episode and there is Jesus writing innocently in the dirt, comforting the terrified adulteress and inviting her to a better life and nobler purpose than the flesh
 - b. following Jesus means walking a route that is illuminated by truth and purpose: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).
2. to follow Jesus means arriving at the correct destination, the very brilliance and glory that he enjoys (John 12:20-26)
 - a. sacrifice and surrender are the costs of discipleship and tokens of eternity, when and where we shall be like Jesus in his glory (First John 3:1-3)
 - b. when compared to eternity, no earthly cost is too great to bear (Second Corinthians 4:16-5:1)

C. Following Jesus Inadequately

1. it becomes plain to the serious observer that some Christians are guilty of following Jesus, but inadequately, as Peter did when he backslid and chose to follow the Lord but only from a distance (Mark 14:43-54)
 - a. Peter proved the distance that had almost instantly developed between him and Jesus by denying knowledge of the Lord three times before dawn
 - b. we follow Jesus at an unsafe distance when we deny him, especially by our inconsistent or dishonest works and words and when we are afraid of being exposed and ashamed as his disciple (First Peter 4:14-16)
2. on the road to Jerusalem, the disciples continued to follow Jesus, but only with fear (Mark 10:32-34)
 - a. it is commendable, though, that they did continue to follow even though they feared what might happen to them
 - b. that is the kind of courage we must minimally have (Revelation 2:10, 13)

D. Refusing to Follow Jesus

1. some, you see, refuse to follow Jesus at all, often because of the associated costs or dangers (Matthew 19:16-22)
2. rejecting Jesus will always bring sorrow, whether it is immediate or eventual, temporary or eternal, depending upon a change of heart

Conclusion

Akoloutho is the word of discipleship—more than claiming church membership, but living faithfully and following closely the life of the savior.

Introduction

Epitage is a word of authority and royal command, one that must be distinguished from opinion, advice and tradition.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word is ἐπιταγή (Strong's #2003, *Epitage*, pr. ep-ee-tag-ay')¹¹⁷
2. *Epitage* is a feminine noun, which means an injunction, mandate, command

B. Translated Words

1. *Epitage* appears seven times in the King James Bible and is translated as commandment in all but one where authority appears instead
2. the New American Standard Bible translates it in similar fashion
3. Paul is the only New Testament writer to use the word at all, even though the gospel writers—especially John—wrote much about authority and obedience
 - a. “There are four passages where he uses it in connexion [sic] with the message, the instruction and the advice which he is giving ... he contrasts that which is by permission and that which is by *epitage*. He contrasts, as it were, that which is a human opinion and that which is a direct, revealed command of God” (Barclay 96).¹¹⁸
 - b. in three passages, he uses the word to describe the authoritative action of God

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay says that in secular Greek, *epitage* is used of the decrees of law, and that in the Septuagint, its five uses denote a royal command
2. from Paul's uses of the word, Barclay shows two great truths
 - a. “The preacher's message is a divine command. When he is really preaching, he is speaking for God. He is bringing to men, not his own opinions, but the direct commands of God” (98).
 - b. “The preacher's commission is from God” (Ibid).

II. Some Applications

A. Teachers in Subjection

1. the writer of Judges described that lawless era as one in which everyone did what seemed right in his own eyes (21:25)
 - a. in a later age, things were more organized, but no less lawless (Jeremiah 5:30-31)
 - b. during the life of Christ, the Pharisees occupied the seat of Moses where the Law was recited, but they were hypocritical instructors (Matthew 23:1-4)
 - c. such men are dismissive of a divine *epitage*—God's authoritative commandment, preferring instead to proclaim and enforce their own wisdom, opinion and tradition (First Timothy 4:1-3, Second Timothy 4:1-5)
2. today, we are surrounded by teachers and sects that are bent on or simply content to publish their own wisdom rather than submit to God's eternal insight
3. teachers of God's word are required to be in subjection to God, just as James warned, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).
4. here, Paul uses the *epitage* to emphasize the teacher's subjection
 - a. the gospel is preached according to it (Romans 16:25-26)
 - b. Paul's apostolic authority was delegated from God (First Timothy 1:1-7)
 - c. preaching is indispensable (Titus 1:1-3, 2:11-15)

B. No Command

1. there are a few times where Paul, writing by inspiration, uses his pen to distinguish between liberty and commandment, or between temporal advice and binding regulation
2. there exists within God's word a vast arena of liberty in which we are allowed either to act or abstain, and both with God's approval
3. there also exists a collection of wise sayings and other advice that do not rise to the level of permanent order
 - a. some of this centered around marriage in the violent first century (First Corinthians 7:1-6)
 1. Paul goes on to recommend celibacy to all in that age who could accept it, but clearly celibacy is not a universal command, for the race or at least the faith would then perish
 2. rather, we see Paul recommending a lifestyle that worked for him without insisting upon it
 - b. later in the chapter, Paul wrote more on marriage (First Corinthians 7:25-28)
 1. again, he advises against marriage in that then present distress, but does not forbid it
 2. there is a judgment, but not an *epitage*
 - c. lastly, when he describes giving to the work of the church, he describes it as something voluntary rather than compulsory (Second Corinthians 8:1-12)
 1. the weekly contribution should be made willingly and without a sense of grudging necessity
 2. only the materialistic would seek to avoid participating in it

Conclusion

Since Christ has all authority in heaven and Earth, we must learn to respect any *epitage* that comes from his word.

Introduction

Xenos is a strange word, but only because of its definition. *Xenos* is the word you use when something is foreign or unusual to you.

Discussion

I. Word Study

A. Original Language

1. the Greek word is ξένος (Strong's #3581, *Xenos*, pr. xen'-os')¹¹⁹
2. *Xenos* is an adjective and apparently a primary word
3. Thayer defines *Xenos* as "a foreigner, a stranger ... alien (from a person or a thing) ... without the knowledge of, without a share in ... new, unheard of ... one who receives and entertains another hospitably ... with whom he stays or lodges, a host"

B. Translated Words

1. *Xenos* appears fourteen times in the King James Bible and is translated as host, strange or stranger
2. the New American Standard Bible translates it in similar fashion

C. Word Picture

1. Barclay tells us that *Xenos* is one of those words that Christians use to describe their attitude about living in this world—we become strangers in our own land because our mindsets are so radically altered that Heaven becomes our only home (281)¹²⁰
2. letters written in Greek tell of ordinary people sojourning in foreign lands and feeling variously like strangers or as though they belonged
3. the Christian, however, grapples with nagging sense that this world is not his home

Here then we have the truth that in this world the Christian is always a stranger; in this world he is never at home; he can never regard this world as his permanent residence. And just because of that he will always be liable to be misunderstood; he will always be liable to be looked upon as a strange character, who follows queer ways which are not the ways of other people. So long as the world is the world, the Christian must remain a stranger in it, because his citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).¹²¹

II. Some Applications

A. Pilgrims

1. Jesus warned his apostles that they would soon begin to feel like strangers in what had been a very familiar place—a place where they were born and raised but where they would now be rejected as troublemakers (John 15:18-21)
2. they would be in the world, but certainly not of the world—a condition that is to describe all of us who seek to serve a savior who is praised in name only wherever the devil holds sway through temptation and wickedness
3. we begin to feel like strangers and pilgrims, even in places otherwise familiar to us—our own nation, our hometown, even sometimes in our own homes where Christ is not so honored
4. that sensation even predates the apostles, though, extending back through the Exodus until it reaches the patriarchs (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16)
5. as the apostles and early disciples became acquainted with stiff persecution, the sense of being a stranger in a familiar world became an expectation (First Peter 4:12-16)

B. One Church

1. where believers lost the company of the worldly, they usually gained the affection of races and classes that had been foreign to them
2. one body of followers was created where there had been two warring factions before—Jews and Gentiles—and there was only one church of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22)

3. today, our divisions are seldom of the Jew/Gentile kind, but involve modern races, languages, ethnicities, and economic classes—do we still occupy one church or are we moved to divide?

4. the answer comes two ways—how we treat believers with whom we differ physically and how willing we are to embrace them as brethren regardless (James 2:1-9)

a. xenophobia—racism and classism—can be practiced by rich and poor, black and white, Anglo and Hispanic

b. no one is immune and no one who practices such bias is excusable

C. Hospitality for Strangers

1. that sense of strangeness should serve to make us sensitive to the needs of others who are in foreign situations and need help or hospitality

2. in fact, Jesus made hospitality a classic sign of true discipleship (Matthew 25:31-46)

a. the *Xenos* in this passage is a stranger to the disciple who is helped along his way

b. the believer hardly recognizes the good that he is doing, but the selfish person also fails to understand how shameful his apathy is

3. the same Greek word sometimes is used also of a host who shows hospitality to a stranger

a. Paul, for instance, wrote about Gaius, his host and the host of the whole church, when he addressed the first letter to the Corinthian saints (see First Corinthians 16:23)

b. John explained further the value of sharing in a stranger's sufferings by lightening his load (Third John 5-8)

D. Foreign Doctrines

1. *Xenos* also describes certain teachings that are foreign to the Bible, but which are taught with recklessness

2. Paul was accused of bringing strange doctrines into Athens, a place that generally loved them (Acts 17:16-21)

a. Paul taught them something very strange about a man who was dead and then returned to life, insisting that all men repent of their idolatry and sin

b. Christ was a stumbling block to many audiences who preferred Greek philosophy or Jewish tradition (First Corinthians 1:18-22)

3. the strange doctrines we seek to avoid are the ones that might have popular approval, but which lack biblical precedent (Galatians 1:6-9)

4. that includes doctrines that had authority under Moses, but which are defunct today; "Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them" (Hebrews 13:9).

Conclusion

Xenos is a strange word, or rather, the word for strangers and foreign things. To some degree, we are all strangers in this world if our citizenship is in heaven.

APPENDIX : REVIEW QUESTIONS

Word Study of Euaggelion

1. What does “gospel” literally mean?
2. What does one do with good news?
3. When did Jesus say the kingdom was going to come?
4. What is the gospel, according to Romans 1:16?
5. What are some “other gospels” that are taught today?
6. What did the eunuch ask Philip after he had taught him about Jesus?
7. How can good news be obeyed?

Word Study of Heilikrineia

1. What does the Greek word Heilikrineia mean?
2. Is sincerity a substitute for doing the right thing?
3. What is the best way to judge someone’s sincerity?
4. How were the hearts of Amos’s contemporaries divided?
5. What was the problem with the church in Laodicea?
6. What does it mean to let God sift my spirit?

Word Study of Porneia

1. How many times does porneia appear in the King James Bible?
2. What was the penalty for fornication under the Law of Moses?
3. What kind of a problem is porneia?
4. Why is porneia such a terrific threat to marriages?
5. What is spiritual adultery?
6. Biblically, what is safe sex?
7. Define abstinence.

Word Study of Phobos

1. What does Phobos literally mean?
2. Is Phobos inherently negative or positive?
3. What separates godly fear from terror of the divine?
4. When did the thief discover his godly fear?
5. When did Peter become afraid as he walked on the water?
6. What kind of fear should we have for earthly authorities?

Word Study of Oinophlugia

1. What does Oinophlugia literally mean?
2. Where is the one time it appears in the Bible?
3. What is the visual evidence of Oinophlugia?
4. What was Noah’s job after the ark’s voyage was completed?
5. What is the caution we gain from watching Lot’s drunkenness?
6. What does “Nabal” literally mean?

Word Study of Aselgeia

1. How is aselgeia translated in the King James Bible?
2. What were the people of Selges of Pisidia like?
3. How is lewdness a heart problem?
4. Is the person who causes another to lust blameless?
5. What fills the eyes of the false teacher?

Word Study of Logos

1. What does “Lego” mean? (Hint: It’s not a plastic building block.)
2. What New Testament character is most closely associated with Logos?
3. How does the word judge?
4. How does the word purify?
5. How does the word bring belief and rebirth?
6. What are our duties to the word?
7. How can we fail to live up to the word?

Word Study of Hubris

1. What are the four “inflation” definitions of hubris?
2. How does hubris affect one’s position as God’s creature?
3. How did Herod show his hubris?
4. What did the Tower of Babel incident teach about hubris?
5. Why was Jesus accused of hubris?
6. What effect does hubris have upon evangelism?

Word Study of Christos

1. What does the root word “Chrio” mean?
2. How is Christos translated in the New Testament?
3. What is the Septuagint? What was its value to the early gospel?
4. What other people were referred to by the word Christos?
5. What do we learn about the Christos in the second Psalm?
6. What had been the popular notion about God’s messiah before Jesus?
7. With what two actions is anointing usually associated?
8. How are Christians anointed?

Word Study of Charisma

1. Define Charizomai.
2. What is the whole basic idea of the word Charisma?
3. What was its military usage?
4. If eternal life is God’s gift, does it follow that we are free of effort?
5. Why does personal merit fail as a means to salvation?
6. What is the point of any gift or ability that God gives to a man?
7. What attitudes should the reception of gifts engender?
8. Why did the Corinthians struggle with their gifts?

Word Study of Aionios

1. What does Aion mean?
2. What is the word picture of Aionios?
3. How did Plato constrain the word?
4. How did Jehovah make a claim for eternity?
5. What determines which eternity a man will receive?
6. How does the New Testament describe eternal torment?
7. What do words have to do with Heaven?
8. What might be the effect upon men if punishment was only temporary?

Word Study of Pleonexia

1. Define Pleonektes.
2. How did Barclay describe the meaning of Pleonexia?
3. What kind of spirit is included in Pleonexia?
4. What were the two brothers arguing over in Luke chapter 12?
5. How far will a greedy person go to get what he wants?
6. What are some things that even disciples do because of greed?
7. How does Pleonexia get involved in sexual sin as well?

Word Study of Presbuteros, Episkopos and Poimen.

1. Define Presbuteros.
2. Define Episkopos.
3. Define Poimen.
4. Why are they connected in the New Testament?
5. How do Protestantism and Catholicism stand opposed to Bible hierarchy?
6. If age is not the defining factor, what is?
7. How is the elders' authority limited?
8. What are their shepherding duties?

Word Study of Agape

1. Give a simple definition for agape.
2. Distinguish it from eros, storge, and philia.
3. What common word is an antiquated biblical translation of agape?
4. Why does Barclay think that Christianity fastened on agape?
5. What does love do for the entire set of Christian virtues?
6. When does the church practice tough love?
7. Why is love greater than faith and hope?
8. What is love more excellent than?

Word Study of Baptizo

1. How is it possible to baptize a cup?
2. What is the difference between bapto and baptizo?
3. How were the Exodus pilgrims baptized?
4. What made John a "Baptist"?
5. Why isn't John's baptism in effect today?
6. What must precede baptism?
7. Why isn't Holy Spirit baptism the one baptism of Ephesians 4?

Word Study of Paidagogos

1. What were the original Paidagogos?
2. How is the word most often translated now?
3. Why did Paul think of himself as a Paidagogos?
4. Who are your Paidagogos in the faith?
5. How did Paul compare the Law of Moses to a Paidagogos?
6. In what did the Pharisees try to ruin the analogy?
7. What should Christians be doing to move beyond any need for a Paidagogos?

Word Study of Ekklesia

1. What is the common meaning of the Greek word “ekklesia”?
2. What is the “Christian sense” of the Greek “ekklesia”?
3. What is a very important connotation of the word that is often lost?
4. What makes up the universal ekklesia?
5. Is local church membership optional?
6. What is wrong with denominationalism?
7. In what sense is the ekklesia a building? In what sense is it not a building?

Word Study of Parakletos

1. What is a Parakletos in the secular sense of the word?
2. How is Parakletos translated in the New Testament?
3. What mission did Jesus lay out for the Parakletos to come?
4. Why was it necessary for Jesus to go away?
5. How does a Parakletos act as our advocate with the Father?
6. What does the Holy Spirit do for us today?
7. How do we approach God’s throne of grace?

Word Study of Parousia

1. What is the simple, secular meaning of the Greek word Parousia?
2. What is the Christian use of the word?
3. How did Jesus make his climactic parousia known in Jerusalem?
4. How will Jesus make his second coming known to the living?
5. When is Jesus coming again?
6. What does the promise of his return do for our patience?
7. What causes some people to lose sight of their hope in his parousia?

Word Study of Akouletheo

1. What does *keleuthos* mean?
2. If Akouletheo isn’t translated as follow, how does the King James render it?
3. How was the word used in Greek?
4. What is involved in counting the cost of discipleship?
5. What is promised to the one who follows Jesus?
6. What makes for an inadequate discipleship?
7. Why do people refuse to follow Jesus?

Word Study of Epitage

1. How does *Epitage* relate to human opinion?
2. How does the preacher deal with his own opinions when preaching?
3. Which did the Pharisees prefer—their opinions or God's authority? Explain.
4. Where do we see the same habit among religions today?
5. To whom is the preacher in subjection?
6. Does Paul ever write without authority from God?
7. Did he let his opinions interfere with his teaching?

Word Study of Xenos

1. What are the two shades of meaning for *Xenos*?
2. What people are *Xenos*? What things are *Xenos*?
3. Why does the Christian begin to feel strange in his home?
4. When did the apostles feel strange most forcefully?
5. Are there any foreigners in the church?
6. What does hospitality allow us to prove?
7. What makes some doctrines strange?

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¹²⁰ Barclay, William. "New Testament Words." Philadelphia PA: The Westminster Press, 1964.

¹²¹ Ibid.