

Definition of Old Testament Words and Phrases

The meaning of words can change -

when they move from one language to another
from one culture to another or
from one time period to another.

Hebrew words and phrases written in the 19th century BC by authors from the Middle East will not always have the same meaning when we read them in English in the 21st century AD. Even the best and most accurate translations cannot always convey the intended meaning.

For example, Bible authors often use **extreme words** for non-extreme meanings.

They use **picture language** to illustrate that which is unknown or less obvious.

Idioms or special phrases are based on the Hebrew language and culture of that day.

Everyone living in their time period or culture automatically understood the meaning.

But we live in the 21st century AD. In the Western world, extreme words are used to describe emotions or actions that are extreme. *Anger*, for us, means an extreme emotion of someone who is out of control. How then should we think about God when we read of God's wrath or God's anger?

To put it simply, what the words and phrases of the Bible mean to us, is not always what the authors were meaning. The purpose of this section is to explain their meaning as the Hebrew mind would have understood them some 3000 plus years ago.

And with these meanings, may we have a renewed clarity of God,

what He is like and His message for us today.

Definitions

#40

Is always connected with testing or judgment, depending on the context.

#70 God-appointed authority or leadership.

Seven represented deity or completion; *ten* represented government or authority. *Ten* times *seven* or *seventy* was leadership appointed by God.

Acknowledge God (knowledge of God)

Means to accept God as God.

To have a relationship with God which produces obedience, thanksgiving, praise, awe and reverence of God Himself, as well as a fear of the consequences when there is disobedience.

Anger

A response to what we believe is wrong or evil.

Apocalyptic literature

Books that use picture language to reveal God's plan for the Jewish people and nation.
The books of Daniel and Ezekiel are good examples.

Asherah

Is the mother of Baal; mother goddess.

Ashera pole

Is a sex symbol; **Asheras** are groves of trees where religious prostitution is practiced.

Ashteroth

Is the wife of Baal; fertility goddess.

Baal

A male god of fertility, who gives fertility to the womb and rain to the ground; represented by a bull.

Babylon

Symbol in Scripture for *rebellion against God*.

Blameless

Right with God because of God's forgiveness.

Blessed

Enriched by the Holy Spirit because of something we have chosen or done.

Canon, Hebrew *The first group of books*. The books confirmed by Ezra as the Jewish sacred books given by God.

Also see **Deutero-canonical**

Child, I am a

I am not qualified, old enough or feel adequate for the job (depending on the context).

Curse, call down a

Means to ask God to judge a person for defying Him or His rules.

Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)

Every year the high priest offered an animal sacrifice for the nation and took some of its blood into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle or Temple.

In the Old Testament, it was a Day of Covering because animal sacrifices only **covered** the sin.

In the New Testament, Jesus came as the Lamb of God who **takes away** the sin of the world;

the penalty for sin has been paid.

Definitions

Day of the Lord

An extended period of time when God responds to injustice and evil. It is not a literal 24-hour day.

In a limited way, the *Day of the Lord* can be any time in history when God takes severe action against sin.
The future meaning is Satan's 7-year kingdom, commonly known the *Tribulation*.

Day of the Lord's Wrath Day (time) of the Lord's justice.

Death means separation

Physical death means life is separated from the body.

Spiritual death means a person is separated from God.

Deutero-canonical *Second group of writings.*

Favorite Jewish stories and history included by Hellenized Jews in the LXX (Septuagint),
the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

East

Everything is seen from the perspective of Israel, so land on the other side of Jordan is "the East".

Elected, chosen, predestined - The Jews were chosen or elected ...

...To let other nations see their companionship with God – how wonderful it was.

...To tell these nations they also could enjoy that companionship if they wanted it.

Faith in God

Coming to God in God's way. Heb. 11:6

Fear of the Lord

A deep relationship with God that is perfectly balanced between awe of *Him* and fear of His consequences.

There is **awe of God Himself** because, after knowing what He is like, we discover He still wants companionship with us.

There is literal **fear of His consequences** if we disobey.

God never wants us to be afraid of Him as a Person. He wants us to be afraid of His consequences if we disobey.

Fool, foolish

A person who reject God's ways; a person who knows about God but chooses not to follow Him.

God Repents of Evil

God changes His action towards people, when people change their attitude towards Him.

God's Anger or Wrath

It means God's judgment; His response to injustice, disobedience or evil.

He is never out of control but He must respond in 2 ways:

He sends consequences **for** the disobedience and separates Himself **from** the disobedience.

God's Jealousy

Means He is committed to what is right, fair and good; zealous.

God's Vengeance

Means God's justice; the Greek word for *vengeance* means *that which produces justice*.

It never includes the idea of revenge.

Heart

Mind, will and emotion; all that a person is; the emphasis is on the mind and will rather than the emotions.

Hope

In both the Old and New Testament it means *absolute certainty*.

Definitions

Humility – godly humility

To obey God, accept His boundaries, have reverence and awe for who He is and fear to disobey because of the consequences.

Idiom

A phrase which means something different than the literal words. Example: *He sure had egg on his face.*

Israel

This name has 7 different meanings.

In the 1800's BC - *Israel* was a **person**; the new name God gave to Jacob.

In the 1400's BC - it was the **land and nation** of the 12 Jewish tribes developed in the days of Joshua.

From 930 - 722 BC - *Israel* was the name of the **northern nation** at the time of the Jewish civil war.

From 536 BC - 70 AD - it was the name of the **southern nation** when people of Judah came back from exile.

From 1948 - present - *Israel* is the name of the **land and nation** of Jews.

In God's Kingdom - it will be the name of the believing **Jews and the land**.

Anytime in history - *Israel* was/is the name for the Jews as a **people - Israelis**

Judge

A leader who protected and delivered the Jewish people thru warfare; it could be a man or woman.

Knowledge of God

A relationship with God that produces a desire to obey, to praise and to thank Him.

There is awe and reverence of God Himself and fear of consequences for disobedience.

Levites:

Descendants of Jacob's 3rd son, Levi, which became the tribe of Levi.

Over time, they divided into family branches that became responsible for some area of service in Jewish life.

Each family branch developed into a profession guild, passed down from father to son thru the generations.

By 400 BC, the Levites were the civil servants in Jewish society.

Some branches served in the Temple in a religious capacity as:

Scribes, priests, musicians, choir members, guards or maintenance workers

Other branches worked thruout the nation as teachers, librarians, historians, administrators or judges.

Still others were social workers who distributed food to the needy within Jewish society.

Love:

There are 2 kinds of love in Scripture: one that is not commanded and one that is commanded.

Love that is **not commanded** involves emotions and feelings, warm fuzzies; it is what we feel in relationships.

Because feelings are spontaneous and changeable, they can never be commanded. *I command you to love me.*

Love that is **commanded** means *to do what is right, based on God's standards*. It is not an emotion;

it is a willful choice.

Love your enemy means no revenge, but protect yourself and hold the person accountable.

Love your neighbor, family, friends means do what is right, instead of what they want.

Love God means to obey what He shows us to do, with right actions, attitudes and to the best of our ability. It means obedience regardless of how we feel.

Love one and hate the other

When used **literally**, the words refer to emotions or feelings.

When used as an **idiom**, it means *to choose one, but not the other*.

Meditate

To spend time thinking about a specific concept, looking at it from every angle. It involves active thinking.

Definitions

Mercy seat

The lid of the ark; the place where God showed mercy in forgiveness because an animal died in place of the nation.

Perfect see **blameless**

Praise

Thanking God for what He has done.

Believing God is able to get us thru a situation when we can see no way out.

Prayers asking God to curse or destroy the enemy

Prayers for God to punish the enemy for his wrong-doing; prayers for justice.

People of the Middle East use extreme words to express non-extreme meanings.

Predestined see **elected**

Priest

A man who represented the people to God; he had to be from Aaron's family line in the tribe of Levi.

Prophet

A man or woman who represented God's presence to the people and gave them God's message.

Propitiation

Means God does not have to separate Himself from His people, because an animal died for their disobedience.

Queen of Heaven

Refers to the pagan goddess of fertility. It started in Babylon with the goddess Ishtar. Each nation gave her a new name when they developed their own religion - Astarte, Isis, Aphrodite, Venus. People worshipped her with incense and food so she would give them more crops, animals or children.

Repent

To turn around; a change of mind that produces a change of direction; an act of the will regardless of how one feels.

Run from God's presence

To stop representing God's presence to others; to quit being a prophet.

Sanhedrin first called the *Great Synagogue*.

Formed by Ezra, in the 400's BC, as a group of 120 men known as the *Sopherim, The Scribes*

Later they reduced the number to 70. They were to be...

...teachers of God's Word

...protectors of the faith by maintaining the expectation of the Jewish Messiah.

...guardians of the faith by investigating anyone who said they were the Messiah and by deciding for the nation if the claim was true or false.

Satan

Means accuser or adversary; **devil** means slanderer.

Scribes

Levites who had the responsibility to care for, protect and make copies of Jewish sacred writings.

The Scribes were the 2nd branch of the Sanhedrin who were chosen to teach and explain God's laws.

Suffering

There is suffering in the world today...

because we live in an imperfect world, with imperfect bodies and with imperfect people. God started with everything perfect. It was Adam and Eve's rebellion against God that changed the perfection to imperfection.

Definitions

Sons of God

In the **Old** Testament it means the good angels.

In the **New** Testament it means those who have accepted Jesus' payment; believers in Jesus.

Synagogue

A local meeting place, where there are a minimum of 10 men, to worship, pray and receive instruction.

Test God *do not test the Lord your God*

Do not demand God to give you *what* you want, *when* you want it.

Testament

God's declaration about Himself and how He will communicate with humanity.

Upright

Right with others.

Walk humbly with your God

Believe and obey what God says; to accept His rules and boundaries.

Wisdom

Human wisdom The ability to use common sense, gifts and talents and understand the world around us.

It is a gift from God to be developed thru what we can see and observe and thru what we can prove thru science, logic and reason.

Anyone can have it. However, human wisdom cannot explain the spiritual, such as the greatness of God.

Godly wisdom Having God's perspective; doing things God's ways and wanting the things God wants.

It is being in tune with God. *Godly wisdom* is all about God.

Only God's people can have it; it is always in proportion with their obedience to God.

The first step to getting it and the most important part of it is *the fear of the Lord*.

This is a deep and profound relationship with God that has an awe of *Him*

and fear of His consequences when there is disobedience.