

Definition of New 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.

Greek words and phrases written in the 1st century AD 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 Jewish thinking 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 Jewish mind would have understood them some 2000 plus years ago in the Middle East.

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

what He is like and His message for us today.

Definitions - 1ST century AD

Adoption

A Roman ceremony when the father declares his boy or girl to be an adult. The Greek word means *placing as son*. See *Ephesians*, chapter 1.

Antichrist

Christ is the translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah*. In the Jewish world, anyone who actively taught that Jesus was not the promised Messiah was an anti-Messiah person - an *anti-christ*. This term also applied to anyone who denied either the humanity or deity of Jesus.

Before Jesus comes to set up God's kingdom, Satan will be allowed to have a counterfeit kingdom. He will use a human being to be his ruler. The Jews will call him Antichrist because he will come *in place of* Jesus to set up a kingdom. He will also be *against* Jesus. He will begin Satan's kingdom by signing a 7-year peace treaty with the Jews and give them the right to rebuild their temple.

Baptism

In the 1st century, it meant identification with a belief or message. It was not invented or started by the Church. All religions and philosophies practiced baptism. It was done in a river so the public could see this profession of belief. They were identifying with and choosing to follow a particular belief, religion or person.

Be Alert, Watch

Wake up your mind and bring together the facts that you know so you can be aware and on guard. cf. Eph. 5:14

Blameless

Means a person is right with God. It does not mean they are without sin.

Blessed

There are 2 different Greek words translated *blessed*. One means people are *enriched by the Holy Spirit because of something they have chosen or done*. The other means *praise*. This is the meaning when referring to God and sometimes to people.

Chosen

The **Jews** are God's *chosen* people, but not to the exclusion of others. They were *chosen* to be God's voice, so His message could reach everyone.

As members of the Body of Christ **we** are *chosen*, but not to the exclusion of others. We are now *chosen* to be God's voice so His message can reach everyone. This was part of God's eternal plan.

God's *choosing of people* (*predestination, election*) never has to do with eternal life, but with their earthly life. God is sovereign. He can choose anyone He wants as a vessel. His purpose will always be accomplished. We have free will. In this life: we can choose what kind of vessel we will be; we can either share in God's glory or share in the consequences of opposing God.

Two perfect examples are Moses and Pharaoh.

At a point in time, God decided to work thru both Moses and Pharaoh. Moses co-operated with God and became a vessel of honor. He shared in the glory of God's work. Pharaoh refused to co-operate. It did not affect God's plans. But Pharaoh, instead of being a vessel of honor, became a vessel of dishonor.

Christ

Christ is the translation of the Hebrew title *Messiah*. Both words mean the *anointed One*. This was a title referring to Jesus, who would be God's *anointed* to fulfill His purpose as Prophet, Priest and King. According to the Old Testament, this Messiah/Christ would be both humanity and deity.

Confess

Means *to say the same thing*. God says it's wrong and I say it is wrong; I agree with God.

Consider / Count it all joy

James 1:2
This phrase means *lead your mind into the attitude of inner stability by how you think and what you focus on*.

Definitions

Day of the Lord

The Bible uses this phrase as the name for Satan's kingdom or what is commonly known as the *Tribulation*. It is a period of 7 years that begins with a treaty between a world leader (Antichrist) and the Jews. It ends with the return of Jesus to set up His kingdom.

Death means separation

Physical death is separation of life from the body.

Spiritual death is separation of a person from God the Father.

Died to sin is separation from the power and control of sin.

Dispersion, scattered

Diaspora; refers to the Jews living outside the land of Israel.

Elected see Predestination

Exiles, strangers, aliens

The Greek word means *to live alongside of Gentiles/non-Jews*.

Faith

The Faith means the Christian faith as taught and developed by the apostles in the New Testament.

To have faith sometimes means salvation faith; to accept the payment of Jesus that He made for us on the cross.

Other times it means the faith we use to live the Christian life or to trust God during times of crisis.

In general, *faith* means *coming to God in God's way*.

God gives everyone "x" amount of faith. If we do not use it, He does not give us more. If we use the faith He gave us in the beginning, it will provide God with opportunity to give us more faith. That faith will include qualities or graces that become the fruit of the Spirit and produce spiritual maturity. 2 Peter 1:5-7

Fear of God

There is **awe of God Himself** because of who He is and what He has done.

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.

Fellowship

From the Greek word meaning, *to have in common; to share or participate in; a partnership based on having things in common*.

We have *fellowship/partnership* with God because we share His life and goals. We see things from His perspective.

When we accepted the payment of Jesus we entered into a permanent, spiritual *partnership* with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As we develop in our knowledge of truth and a life of holiness, we experience the joy of that *partnership* - both emotionally and with inner stability.

We have *partnership* with other believers when we have 3 things in common: a Biblical belief about Jesus, a life of obedience and enjoyment of Biblical truth.

First-born

Refers to literal birth only when talking about a mother and her specific child.

Otherwise it always means a person or thing that came **first** or was **before** other persons or things. It has nothing to do with actual birth. It literally means *the first to come* (in a series of things or people).

Gnosticism

An eastern religion. See the lesson on Colossians for the details.

God's Anger or Wrath

Means God's judgment; His response to injustice, disobedience and 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

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

Definitions

God's Vengeance

Means God's justice; the Greek word for *vengeance* means *that which produces justice*.
It never includes the idea of revenge.

Goodness or Virtue

The ability to repel evil; to stand up for what is right; moral excellence that is shown with power.

Great White Throne Judgment

This is the final judgment after God's kingdom of 1000 years. It happens just before eternity and involves only unbelievers from thruout history. They are resurrected, meaning their soul and spirit are reunited to a resurrected body that cannot die. They are shown they are not in the Book of Life, meaning they never accepted the payment of Jesus in order to have eternal life with Him. They are therefore separated from God forever.

Hand over to Satan

It means church discipline of a church member for specific sins. See the lesson on 1 Corinthians.

Head

A leader who provides opportunities for others to develop and wants to bring out the best in them.

Heart

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

Hope

In Hebrew, Greek and Old English, when used as a noun, it means *absolute certainty*.

If... There are 4 possible meanings to an "if" sentence. It is the Greek grammar that shows the differences.

If and it is true	is called 1 st class condition and should be translated "since" because it is a true statement.
If and it is not true	2 nd class condition
If and it may or may not be true	3 rd class condition
If and I wish it were true	4 th class condition

Jesus

Names/phrases that emphasize His Humanity: Jesus, "come in the flesh."

Names that emphasize His Deity: Son, Son of God, Lord, Sovereign.

Phrases that emphasize His Deity: the One from the beginning; Word of Life; Eternal Life; the Righteous One.

Title: Messiah / Christ - the One anointed by God the Father to be Prophet, Priest and King.

Jewish Believers

In the New Testament, the Jews as a people or nation are referred to as: *God's elect, strangers, scattered* (Diaspora).
As individuals, when they believed Jesus was their promised Messiah and accepted His payment for their sin, they became known as believers in Jesus or Christ-ones (Christians). They became part of the Church, the Body of Christ. But they also remained part of the Jewish Remnant, entitled to the Old Testament promises to the Jews.

Jewish Hellenists

Jews who were born and raised outside the land of Israel who spoke Greek as their first language. They considered themselves more intellectual than the Jews from Israel.

Jewish Nationalists

Jews who were born and raised in the land of Israel who spoke Aramaic as their first language. They considered themselves more spiritual.

Joy

An inner stability because we understand and accept who God is and what He can do.

Consider it joy *when going thru trials* means

lead your mind into the attitude of inner stability by how you think. James 1:2

Definitions

Judgment Seat of Christ

The literal Greek is “Bema.” It is a Reviewing Stand in heaven, when every believer’s work is evaluated and rewarded. See the lesson on 2 Corinthians for the background to this word.

It is also a time of vindication, apologies and justice for that which was left unresolved in this life.

Justified

It means the fine, debt or payment I owed was paid in full by Jesus. He was separated from the Father in my place. When I accept that payment, God the Father declares me holy; the holiness of Jesus is transferred to my account. My unholiness is put on Jesus’ account.

To Know

Ginosko: to know progressively about moral or spiritual issues thru experience.

Oida: to know as fact based on observation.

Knowledge

Gnosis: general knowledge about moral or spiritual issues that comes thru experience.

Epignosis: accurate, deeper knowledge about moral or spiritual issues that comes with spiritual maturity.

Law

The meaning depends on the context. It can mean...

All 613 of God’s laws to Old Testament Jews; just the Ten Commandments; all of the Old Testament; or what people instinctively know about God’s requirements (*law written on their heart*).

In salvation

Faith in Jesus gives us freedom from the laws of Moses as a system of self-effort - of trying to be good enough and do enough to get right with God or to have power over the sin nature.

In the Christian life

We are free from the law of Moses (Ten Commandments) which ended with Jesus’ death.

The purpose of the Ten Commandments today is to restrain society because those in the world cannot control their sin nature.

Believers in Jesus are under the Law of Christ Gal. 6:2 ; also called the Law of the Spirit of life. Rom. 8:2

Nine of the Ten Commandments are now part of the Law of Christ. That is why we keep them today.

Paul added other rules in his letters to the churches. They show us what is right and wrong from God’s perspective. The Law of Christ is instruction for our “Christ”-life - our Christian life.

Lord

The title for Jesus to show His authority and deity.

Love

Eros: is sexual, physical love which was given by God as a gift that is holy, pure and good within marriage.

Because it was so misused outside of marriage, the word became associated with immorality - *erotic*.

Phileo: is fondness and affection based on emotions and feelings. Because feelings are spontaneous and changeable, they cannot be commanded. *I command you to love me*

Agape: to do what is right, based on God’s standards. It comes from the will, so it is always a choice one can make.

This is the only love that can be commanded: We are to *love God, love your neighbor, love your enemies*

God is love means because God is holy He always does what is right.

To *love God* means to obey; to do what God says.

To *love the world* means to do what the world system says is right.

To *love believers* means to do what is right towards them.

To *hate believers* means to do what is wrong towards them.

To *agape love* someone is not what we feel about them, but how we act towards them. It means to do what is right regardless of feeling. Because it is not based on feeling, it is not controlled by fear about what others will think or feel about us.

Definitions

Love one/hate the other

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

When used as an idiom, it means to choose one rather than the other.

Mystery means spiritual truth that was not previously known. Jesus personally taught and revealed to Paul:...

...that God works in different ways in different time periods.

...that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit planned salvation before the world was created.

...that the Church would be made up of believing Jews and Gentiles united into one Body.

...what His plan would do for those who chose to believe. See Ephesians, chapters 1, 3, 5, 6.

Overcomes, the one who

Means a believer; a person who has put their faith in Jesus.

Parousia

It is the Greek word for “coming” in 1 Thessalonians 4:15. It means *to be alongside of Jesus* when we meet Him in the clouds and He takes us to His home. (“The Rapture”) In the New Testament it is translated as *comes* or *coming*.

Passover

The Jewish holy day that is celebrated every year in March or April. It is a reminder of Jewish history when God freed His people from slavery in Egypt.

Pentecost

Jewish holy days that lasted seven days to thank God for the grain harvests.

Predestination, Election and Chosen are words describing God’s plan from before the foundation of the world, including:

That the death and resurrection of Jesus would be the way for humans to become right with Him. (salvation) Eph. 1:5

That the Father would see all who accepted Jesus’ payment as holy and blameless - just as He sees Jesus. Eph. 1:4

That all who believe...

...are to display the qualities of Jesus in their daily lives. (conformed to the image of His Son) Rom. 8:29

...will have eternal glory. 2 Cor. 4:17

...are declared adults so they can inherit their spiritual blessings. Eph. 1:5

...will never cease to praise the grandeur and wonder of His grace. Eph. 1:6

...will live in such a way that others will be in awe of who God is. Eph. 1:11-12

...will have changed lives that are spiritually growing and maturing. Eph. 2:10

Romans 9 talks about certain people being chosen by God for a special *ministry* - such as Moses and Pharaoh.

Ephesians talks about believers being chosen by God for certain *results*.

Rapture See *Parousia*

Reconciled

It means our sin no longer separates us from God because Jesus made our payment and we accepted it.

Repentance

A change of mind that produces a change of direction and action.

Righteous, righteousness

It means to be right with God or declared by God to be “not guilty.”

Sanctification

To become more holy in our daily living thru the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

Spiritual

In the Bible it means that which originates or comes from the Holy Spirit.

Definitions

Subject, to be; Submission

When used about people, the Greek word is **reflexive** which means it is what you do to yourself.

It is a choice or wise response that gives both sides what they want. It is accepting one's place, based on the situation, rather than lashing out in words or actions; it is choosing to work **with** rather than **against** the other person.

However it never means to be controlled by another person so that you lose your identity or self-awareness. It has nothing to do with control or abuse. In our day, if there is abuse, God wants those who are abused to get out of the situation.

Suffering

God allows suffering as the consequence of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God. Suffering comes because we live in an imperfect world, with imperfect bodies, and with imperfect people.

Tests, trials that are unexpected and are not the result of anything we said or did...

These are the ones we are to accept them because they come from God to bring out the best of His nature within us.

Temptations

We are to resist them because they come from Satan to bring out the worst of our human nature.

Temptation is Satan's offer to meet our needs or desires outside of God's boundaries. It is appealing because we can have what we want when we want it. **Hearing** Satan's offer is never sin. It is **accepting** Satan's offer that becomes sin.

Time of God's wrath

Means the same as *The Day of the Lord*. It is Satan's 7-year Kingdom on this earth (known as the *Tribulation*).

Trials See Tests

They come from God to bring out the best of His nature within us. They are beneficial in our lives.

Wisdom

Human wisdom, wisdom of this world, foolishness of man means *wisdom that originates from human nature*.

It is based on society's values and uses only the human mind to logically explain things related to God.

God's wisdom, spiritual wisdom means *wisdom that originates from God*.

It is based on God's values and uses the teaching of the Holy Spirit to logically explain things related to God.

World

Sometimes it means creation or humanity; people on this earth. We are to love this.

Other times it means the world system with the values of Satan that are in direct opposition to God.

We are not to love this nor have friendship with it.