

General Topics :: How a unique word gives greater clarity

How a unique word gives greater clarity - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2015/5/31 12:55

Sometimes, while reading scripture we come across an uncommon word being used. In these instances, understanding why this particular word was chosen may become as valuable to our spiritual life as finding a rare physical gem is to a natural man.

Just recently, I discovered such a gem - the Greek word ἰσχυρός . We get our English word "foul" straight from this rare Greek word. This word is very rare in comparison to the far more common Greek word used for evil - κακός . But ἰσχυρός is used in two key passages in the gospel of John; one passage uses ἰσχυρός as the descriptive word for those who will be condemned after the resurrection of the dead, the other passage uses ἰσχυρός to explain why men do not come to the light.

John 5:29 - "And they shall come out of the grave, those who have done good will rise to live; those who have done ἰσχυρόν , will rise to be condemned."

John 3:20 - "For everyone doing ἰσχυρόν , hates the light and will not come into the light, in order that his works should not be exposed."

Why did Jesus and John use this word instead of the far more common word - κακός ? The answer is full of meaning for those who hunger and thirst for wisdom and righteousness.

No one ever knew the scriptures as well as Jesus, and I believe He chose ἰσχυρός to describe the actions of those who will be condemned at the judgment because of His awareness of where and how ἰσχυρός was used in the Old Testament. I believe we will see His wisdom when seeing ἰσχυρός in the context of where it was used before.

Numbers 15: 30-31 - " And the soul who shall do a thing by the hand of pride, whether native born, or of the proselytes, that one provokes God and that soul shall be utterly destroyed from out of his people. For he treated the word of the Lord as ἰσχυρόν , and he effaced His commandments - that soul shall be obliterated, his sin is upon him."

II Samuel 12:9 - "Why did you treat the word of the Lord as ἰσχυρόν , to do this wicked thing in His eyes; You struck Uriah the Hittite by the sword and you took his wife to yourself for a wife and you killed him by the sword of the sons of Ammon."

These two passages hold the key to why Jesus and John used ἰσχυρός , instead of κακός . All of our sin is evil (κακός), but is all sin ἰσχυρόν ? No, we find in both the Old Testament and the New Testament that certain sins are far more grievous to God than others. Certain sins were not even pardonable, sins such as idolatry, adultery, premeditated murder, incest, etc..

Perhaps we have completely missed the meaning of certain New Testament passages due to our theological attempt to explain who is or is not saved, when this was not even on the writer's mind. I am referring to passages like Hebrews 6 and Hebrews 10.

What if the writer of the New Testament did not even have that point in his mind? What if he was merely warning that certain types of sin are unpardonable, whether committed by a person who professed faith or one who did not?

Even our own human judicial system recognizes differing degrees of crimes committed and has established protocols for determining whether an accused person's actions warrant the most severe punishment or lesser punishment based upon certain criteria.

We find this same criteria throughout scripture as well - "The servant who knows his master's will and does not do it will be beaten with many blows, but the servant who does not know his master's will and does not do it will be beaten with few blows." "Let not many profess to be teachers, for teachers will be held to a stricter judgment." "If we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no sacrifice for sins, only a fearful expectation of judgment."

If we meditate upon the truth of accountability, and look at why Jesus used the word ἁγιόκλητος, - we might marvel at just how deep our Lord's understanding of the scripture was. He chose ἁγιόκλητος, out of His deep understanding of His Father's righteous judgment.

One other passage in the Old Testament uses ἁγιόκλητος,, but some might argue that this should be of little concern to us, because the passage was a rebuke to the priesthood of Levi, and we know that priesthood is no longer in service today. We have become the royal priesthood of believers. But if you are curious to see how ἁγιόκλητος, was used in the passage I am referring to, here it is for your consideration.

Malachi 1:6 - "A son glorifies his father and a servant his master. So if I am a father, where is my glory and if I am your Lord, where is the fear of Me, says the Lord Almighty. It is you O priests, the ones treating My Name as ἁγιόκλητος,...."

May the Lord give His understanding to all who meditate upon it with a great desire to "see".

I for one, understand more than ever before why men will be judged. Moreover, something else even more precious when seen in the light of what we have been considering. When our Lord Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, the first matter of importance in His own mind laid the foundation for all that would follow - "Our Father who are in heaven HALLOWED be Thy Name!"

May our lives be ones that "HALLOW" His name and not "ἁγιόκλητος," (foul) it!