

## WORDS THAT MUST MAKE YOU PAUSE | SESSION 1

The Bible is a book of *words*, not *ideas*. It is the *words* that are foundational to the *ideas* of the faith, and the *ideas* must always submit to the *words*.

With the importance of the words themselves, there are several “words that must make you pause” because these words have inherent challenges of translation into English from the Hebrew or Greek.

### OLD TESTAMENT WORDS

- Satan: *Every usage is an interpretation, that the word is a proper noun rather than an “adversary,” or vice versa.*
  - English word count: 55 (19 OT, 36 NT)
  - Hebrew: שָׂטָן (*satan*). Translated *Satan* (proper noun) 19 times, *adversary* 7 times, and *withstand* once.
  - The word is *any adversary* or *one who withstands*.
  - Amazingly, its first use is a reference to the Lord Himself, as an adversary against Balaam – Num. 22:22
  - The first use as a proper noun is 1 Chronicles 21:1, but even here could *grammatically* be construed to be the Lord, when compared to 2 Samuel 24:1.
  - The most common occurrence in the Hebrew is in the book of Job, where Satan is always seen with the Lord (which also occurs in Zechariah 3:1-2).
  - Every use of the Greek (New Testament) *Satan* is used as a proper noun. By the time of Greek influence, the word was only used as the name of the devil.

### NEW TESTAMENT WORDS

- Atone / Atonement – the word is an Old Testament concept not applicable to our dispensation.
  - The use of *atone* and *atonement* in the Old Testament is clear: *it is a covering for sin*.
  - In the New Testament, the word is used as a substitute word for *reconciliation*.
    - Romans 5:11 is the only use of *atonement* in the KJV New Testament. The word is translated **reconciled** twice in verse 10. The KJV translators put a marginal note “reconciliation” to clarify. By 1611, the word *atonement* was used refer to the finished work of Christ in the English language, and the KJV translators adopted the English meaning of the word.
- Church – The word is broadly used in the scriptures but narrowly defined in English.
  - The word is most often a translation of ἐκκλησία [*ecclesia*], which is simply an assembly of any kind. Compare Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

- It is a fallacy that *ecclesia* means “the called-out ones,” though this is often proclaimed. While the word does have a connection with *called*, it is because “meant originally any public assembly of citizens summoned by a herald.”<sup>1</sup>
- The word was used by the Septuagint to refer to the nation of Israel and was even found in Ephesus to refer to the gatherings at the Temple of Artemis.<sup>2</sup>
- Building any Christian doctrine based on the use of the word *church* is foolishness.
- Deacon - the word can be used of a servant or an officer of the church.
  - The Greek word is used 37 times, but only twice as an officer of the church (1 Tim. 3:10, 13).
  - To consider Phoebe an officer of the church based upon Romans 16:1 would require that the government official is also a Deacon according to Romans 13:4.
- Devil – Within the KJV, *devil* or *devils* is not considered as the name of “the Devil.” Each time the word is used it is in lower-case and requires interpretation.
  - Matthew 4:1 is a reference to Satan, Matthew 9:33 is not.
- Saved – Salvation comes in many different forms.
  - There is often a physical Salvation, especially when referring to the Kingdom of God. See Matthew 10: 22.
  - Our Salvation by grace through faith is one possibility of the meaning of the word saved / Salvation. This is its usage in passages like Ephesians 2:8.
- Gentile – an anachronistic word that can lead the student of the word in the wrong direction.
  - The word *Gentile(s)* is used 99 times in the KJV New Testament.
  - In New Testament days, there simply was not a word that meant *non-Jew*, unless it was the word *uncircumcised*.
  - The word εθνος [ethnos] can refer to Gentiles, but it can also refer to Jews living in other nations (as is possible in 1 Thessalonians 2:16). In the singular [*ethnon*] it can refer to the nation of Israel – see Acts 10:22 or 1 Peter 2:9.
  - Incidentally, *heathen* carries no negative connotations in the KJV. It is simply a transliteration of *ethnos* (see Acts 4:25).
- Jew – The word sometimes refers to those living in Judea.
  - Every time the word is used, it is a translation of Ἰουδαῖος [Ioudaios]. The word is literally, *Judean*.
  - The student of the Word must interpret whether the reference is to *people living in Judea*, as in John 11:54, or if it is related to the Jewish people as a whole (most common) or even to the Jewish religious leadership, as in John 10:24.

---

<sup>1</sup> James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 195.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 195.