

*Grace, Unmerited?***Appendix vii**

Abusing Lexicons

There was an interesting article that reminded Bible students to use caution in using lexicon resources. The listed abuses of lexicons include the following. I investigated **multiple** sources for the preparation of this book in the hope of avoiding such abuses.

1. Arbitrarily choosing a definition from a list of lexical possibilities

. A certain term in a given translation may not suit the reader's preferred viewpoint. He looks the word up in Strong's concordance or some other lexicon. Noting that the term can have a variety of meanings, he simply chooses the one he likes.

2. Assigning the root fallacy

A common error is known as the "root fallacy." A Bible student will note the root meaning of a biblical term, and **assume** that the term used in the Bible reflects that root meaning. In fact, very often, the term will have completely lost its root meaning by the time it is used in writing the Bible.

An example in English will show the danger of assigning root meanings to biblical terms: The root meaning of "nice" comes from the Latin "nescius," meaning "ignorant." Can one imagine someone suggesting that it is inappropriate to speak of a person as being "nice,"

3. Assigning modern meanings to biblical terms

A frequent mistake is assigning a modern meaning to a biblical term. How many times have you heard someone quote Romans 1:16, "[the gospel] is the power of God unto salvation"), and say: "The Greek term for power is *dunamis*, from which we get our term, *dynamite*. Therefore, the gospel is the *dynamite* of salvation..." ? This is a mistake. The fact that *dynamite* is derived from *dunamis* does not mean that the Greek term had any such explosive implications during New Testament times. **DO NOT ASSIGN A MODERN MEANING TO A BIBLICAL TERM, SIMPLY BECAUSE A MODERN MEANING IS DERIVED FROM THAT TERM.**

4. Using Webster's dictionary

NEVER, BUT NEVER, LOOK UP BIBLICAL TERMS IN A MODERN DICTIONARY, unless it provides meanings for archaic terms, or unless the translation you are using is reasonably modern. Definitions in a contemporary dictionary may have absolutely nothing to do with the meaning of a term in New Testament times, or at the time the translation was produced.

5. *Trust reputable translations*

If you don't know much about biblical languages, DON'T MESS WITH THEM. Look the verse in question up in the NKJV or some respected translation, and trust that they are the most accurate. Most of the time they will be. I was always warned to use a translation that was made by several scholars of different backgrounds so that theological biases would ideally be minimized.

6. *Biased translations*

NEVER CHOOSE A TRANSLATION BECAUSE YOU THINK THE TRANSLATOR HAS HAD SOME DEEP SPIRITUAL INSIGHT INTO THE MEANING OF THE TEXT. Translators should translate; commentators should write commentaries. The Amplified Bible is a combination of commentaries and translations and so states. Some translations I understand are based on the Amplified. If this is true then the result may be readable but inaccurate.

7. *Excessive distinctions between synonyms*

Do not pay too much attention to comments that draw strict distinctions between what are often nearly synonymous terms: RHEMA and LOGOS (word), AGAPE and FILEO (love), GINWSKW and OIDA (know), for example. This is not to say that distinctions do not exist; but they are usually not as distinct as we are led to believe, and sometimes there is no difference at all.

8. *What profundities are hidden therein !!*

Be suspicious of attempts to discover deep, hidden meanings in the original languages. There are many individuals **who continually try to find mysterious nuances in the Hebrew and Greek in order to support some pet theory.** In fact, there are many fewer hidden meanings in the original languages than people think. Most of them have been dealt with quite adequately in the translations. It is always impressive to hear someone say, "I have looked into the original Greek here, and...." How many are capable of disputing what he says? Actually, however, he has probably erred in his conclusions, because he really doesn't understand how the language works.

9. *Misusing Strong's concordance's synonyms*

Strong's concordance is a handy resource for people who know little or nothing about biblical languages, and it can be helpful. However, it can be and in fact is consistently misused by those who do not understand what it provides.

An exhaustive concordance lists (1) every term that appears **in the translation** it is designed to cover (the **KJV**, in the case of **Strong's**), (2) the verses in which they occur, and (3) Hebrew (Aramaic) and Greek lexicons which list the terms in the original languages, along with their roots, definitions and other information

Dr. Strong (well over 100 years ago!) located every occurrence of a given Hebrew or Greek (or Aramaic) term in the Old and New Testaments, and made a list of the English terms the KJV translators **used** in their translation. He then inserted the lists into his lexicons. Therefore, the list of English words that appear after definitions represent the terms used by the translators of the AV. The point is made that this list may not be the final word as the authoritative definitions of the term in question.

An example:

A person is reading his KJV, and comes across Acts 12:4, which reads in part:
"*...intending after Easter*^{G3957} *to bring him forth to the people.*"

G3957 pascha *pas'-khaḥ* Of Chaldee origin (compare [H6453]); the *Passover* (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it): - **Easter, Passover.**

modified from an article on translations:

http://www.christianresourceslinks.com/translation_errors.htm 2010
