

STUDY PACK 14

POLYSEMY AND OTHER PRINCIPLES

"When controversy then happens for the right understanding of any place or sentence of Scripture ... we ought not so much to look what men before have said or done as unto that which the Holy Ghost uniformly speaks within the body of the Scriptures ..."

~~ John Knox, John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, p. 15) ~~

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF POLYSEMY

"Words in all languages have their _____ and _____ meanings: and to retain the primary meaning in a translation _____."

~~ Editor's note, *Calvin's Commentary on Hosea*, p. 475 ~~

- A. In _____ languages many words or phrases have multiple possible meanings. The proper choice among the possibilities is determined by _____ and _____.
- B. _____, _____ and English are all _____.
- C. In the dictionary the most common use of a word is listed first. Various other possible definitions are listed in _____.
- D. God does not always choose to use the primary definition of a word. The _____ refer to this in their translator's preface on page 11.
- E. One example of polysemy is _____. It has three proper translations. God (_____), gods (_____, _____), gods (_____). The context determines the proper translation.
- F. Another example is the word "pascha." In Greek literature, it simply means _____. It is used of at least four different holidays including _____ and _____. The _____ determines which religious holiday is being referred to. In the New Testament it is properly translated Passover _____. It is properly translated Easter _____, Acts 12:4.

II. GOD-GIVEN NEW MEANING OF WORDS

"Some words were thus changed by the Holy Spirit, and were purified as silver is purified in furnace; and used in a higher, a better, nobler and a different sense from that in which man had ever used them."

~~ E.W. Bullinger, *How to Enjoy the Bible*, p. 234 ~~

In giving man the Scripture, God often gives words new meanings!

1. Virtue, I Pet. 1:3, 5 meant _____ or _____ in common Greek usage. God gave the word a higher meaning – good or noble. See Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19, 8:46.
2. Angel, Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 3:1, 7, 14 originally meant a messenger of the gods but God gave a new meaning - messenger of God. It is used of supernatural beings and pastors.
3. Church (over 100 uses in New Testament) originally meant any called out assembly. It is used in Acts 7:38 in this sense. God gave it a higher meaning – my church - Matt. 16:18.
4. Comforter, John 14:16, 26 was originally a term that referred to a legal assistant. God uses it to refer to the Holy Spirit!
5. Baptism was used to refer to any immersion with water. God uses it to refer to the divine symbol of His death, burial and resurrection.

III. THE GRANVILLE SHARP RULE

The Granville Sharp Rule states that when two nouns are separated by the word 'and' with the first noun having the article in front of it but the second noun without the article, only one person is being referred to.