

ScriptureGram

A brief word from God's Word

From: Bob Evely
Wilmore, Kentucky
www.GraceEvangel.org

Subject: "White Papers"

In my business career I frequently receive a "White Paper" ... a research report on a particular topic. I see the need for White Papers based on various Biblical topics, enabling us to consider these topics from the Biblical point of view with insights provided by various individuals within the Body of Christ.

In the numerous church denominations and affiliations of our day you will find topical studies, but all are biased from the perspective of the denomination or affiliation. These studies represent the voice of the hierarchy within the affiliation ... whether it be Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, or even an "independent" group. Any who may present teachings or insights contrary to what their religious tradition approves of will be silenced, and their insights will not be presented.

Even Bible translations are biased by "religion." The translator(s) come from within a particular brand of church tradition which influences the word selection used in the translation. Since the 5th century, for example, most brands of church tradition believe there to be an endless torment for the Unbeliever ... a literal place of perpetual burning that is never extinguished and that keeps the occupants alive forever just for the sake of their continued torment. This doctrinal belief causes the Bible translator to see "hell" each time the Hebrew "sheol" or the Greek "hades, Gehenna, or Tartarus" appears ...

EXCEPT for those cases where sheol or hades cannot possibly refer to their notion of "hell" ... as in cases where the Bible places the righteous there. So in these cases the translator chooses another word ... like grave or death.

Use a widely accepted reference tool, like "Young's Analytical Concordance" for example, and you will easily see this inconsistency ... and many others. Sometimes hades means hell ... but other times grave. Sometimes aion means forever ... but other times age. Most Bible translations are VERY inconsistent; and based very much on the opinions and the doctrinal beliefs of the translator(s). They are not pure translations ... but interpretations.

[By the way, I highly recommend the Concordant Literal New Testament and Concordant Version of the Old Testament as a good, consistent, unbiased translation. It is not affiliated with any religious tradition. While more difficult to read, it is very consistent in the translation, and allows the Bible student to trace each word back to see the original Greek or Hebrew.]

Just as translations are biased and inconsistent, so also are topical studies as presented by scholars and teachers within the religious community. Each has been trained within their tradition, and each views Scriptural topics thru the lens of their tradition. In other words, their mind is made up before the study begins ... and the study simply uses various Scriptures to “prove” the position taken.

God has brought into my life many Believers who have escaped religious tradition and who are not affiliated with any particular brand of the church. They earnestly seek to learn from Scripture what God has revealed to us.

All of the forementioned to say this.

I plan to develop, from time to time, “White Papers” on various Biblical topics. The first will come to you shortly. As is always the case with anything coming from me, you are free to forward what you receive to others. I will begin by compiling my own considerations of the topic. I invite any to provide me with their insights and feedback. As editor I will add to the White Paper as deemed appropriate, thereby resulting in a study that incorporates the insights of many.

To any that wish to contribute I ask the following. Please be brief and concise in your contributions. Our purpose will be to reach the common man/woman, not the PhD scholar. I am convinced that ANY thought, no matter how complex, can be communicated in such a way so as to be understood by the common man. No million dollar words are necessary. Use five dollar words instead. Write and re-write your thoughts until you are confident the man/woman of average intelligence will understand what you are saying.

Be brief. Don't refer me to web sites, but state your point in your own words.

Don't use many words when a few will do.

Present your ideas in a logical fashion. Imagine you are trying to convince a jury of what you are presenting. Convey your thoughts in such a way so as to convince.

I will do my best to review all insights submitted, and reserve the right to edit what is submitted, or to exclude any that seem repetitive or that fail to make a point. I consider myself to be of average-to-better-than-average intelligence, and fairly well versed

in the Scriptures. If you cannot make your point so I can understand it, I cannot incorporate it into the paper as it would only confuse the reader.

I plan to post these White Papers on our web site where they will be accessible to all, and will continually revise them as necessary.

I pray that this effort will prove beneficial to all earnest seekers of Biblical truth within the Body of Christ.

Please feel free to forward a copy of this note along to others as you wish. We are always happy to add others to our distribution list if they simply ask us to do so. If you wish to be removed from our distribution list, please drop us a note to let us know.

- Bob Evely -