

Eagle Warning
Sep. 17, 2017

On occasion I will read a word and think to myself, "That is an interesting word. I wonder where it comes from." I will go look it up in my dictionary and see from where it is derived. Many of our English words originated in Latin or Greek. And many have gone through changes in meaning. Some words take on a narrower meaning and others take on a broader meaning.

Take, for instance the word "conversation." As we use it today it means a verbal dialogue between two or more people. It is people talking back and forth. That is a conversation. But 400 years ago the word conversation had a different meaning. The archaic meaning was "the way you live, behavior." (**conversation = the way you live, behavior**) That covers a lot more than just a dialogue between people. We see it used with this meaning in the King James Version of the Bible. Look at the following verse from Philippians in both the KJV and the NIV.

Philippians 1:27 (KJV) Only [let your conversation](#) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:
Philippians 1:27 (NIV) Whatever happens, [conduct yourselves](#) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The old use of conversation covered more than just your words. It covered all of your behavior. But over time the use of the word has become more narrow.

Other words have taken on a broader meaning. Take the name "Zion" for example. Originally it referred to Mount Zion in the land of Israel. More specifically it referred to the top of Mount Zion, which was really the end of a mountain ridge, with valley on three sides. It was a great place for a fort. Indeed, the Jebusites lived there in their small fort for many centuries as the fort was difficult to capture.

Well King David figured out a way to capture the fort. And afterwards, David decided it would be the best place to make the capital city for his kingdom. You know this city as Jerusalem.

Over time, the name Zion was stretched to mean more than where the fort stood. David's son, Solomon built a temple for Yahweh in this city, to replace the tabernacle. So as people talked of going to the temple, they would sometimes say they were going to Zion to worship associating the name with the temple. In time, people used the name Zion to refer to the whole city of Jerusalem. And still further in history the name Zion was sometimes used by Christians as a reference to heaven. We see an example of this in one of our hymns. The lyrics of which read, "We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion; We're marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God." So the name Zion expanded in meaning.

Today I want to do a word study with you. It concerns a word that appears often in the Bible. We are going to see it in several passages, in both testaments, but first I need to ask you about animal sounds.

When we are teaching little children about animals, we teach them the sounds the animals make. The pig goes "oink, oink." The cow goes "moo." The duck goes "quack." I have

never seen an eagle sound in a children's book. In fact, I don't think we have an English word for what the eagle says. Does anyone know an English word for the eagle sound?

Well in other cultures there IS a word for what the Eagle says. The Israelites taught their children that the eagle said, "hoy". The eagle says, "Hoy, hoy." We will see this word in just a moment. The Greeks taught their children that the eagle said "oo-eye, oo-eye." You can take that bit of trivia to school or work this week and impress others.

Now the interesting thing about these two sound words is that they have a meaning greater than the sound of the eagle. In both Hebrew and Greek cultures, the sound of the eagle is a warning. This comes across in the English translation of the Hebrew and Greek words for the sound of the eagle. Look at it in Isaiah 30, verse 1.

Isaiah 30:1 (NIV) "Woe (hoy) to the obstinate children," declares the LORD,"

The eagle sound word is translated into English as "woe". Now this is not the surprised or shocked woe of today's American culture. This is not, "Woe, dude, that's awesome!" Instead it is the older, "Woe is me. I am in trouble."

We see it used this latter way in Isaiah 6, after Isaiah saw a vision of God Himself.

Isaiah 6:5 (NIV) "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips (sinner), and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Here we hear Isaiah himself bemoaning his sorry state. He is afraid he will be put to death since he is a sinner and has seen God. This use of woe means, "This is bad. This is awful. I am in deep trouble." Isaiah is distressed, worried, afraid. He is in trouble. And that is exactly how God is using it in chapter 30.

Isaiah 30:1 (NIV) "Woe to the obstinate children," declares the LORD, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin;"

The word God speaks there is "hoy" the sound the Hebrews taught their children that the eagle made. In these ancient cultures an eagle was a bad omen. So the sound the eagle made became a bad omen also. It meant something bad was going to happen to you. I don't believe this, but in their superstitions they did. So they used the sound word to mean something bad was coming to a person. We see this in the book of Revelation

Revelation 8:13 (NIV) As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! (oo-eye) Woe! (oo-eye) Woe (oo-eye) to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

The context explains that God is going to punish unbelievers. That is why the eagle says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth."

That is how it is used in Isaiah 30. God is saying that something bad is coming to the Israelites for their sinful resistance to doing the will of God. Now, in the context of Isaiah 30 we read that they were looking to form a military alliance with the Egyptians instead of relying on Yahweh for protection. This is more sin on top of their other sins.

In Matthew 23 Jesus makes a series of pronouncements against the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. He begins each of these pronouncements with the word oo-eye, or woe in English. Look at one example.

Matthew 23:13 (NIV) "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

He goes on and on with other accusations, each introduced with, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees." Then He says, in verse 33...

Matthew 23:33 (NIV) "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?

Jesus is warning them of their impending doom if they do not repent of their sins. So too is God, in Isaiah 30, calling His people to repent. They have gotten into the habit of sinning. Note that He calls them obstinate children. Various translations call them rebellious children, stubborn children, or apostate children.

(obstinate, rebellious, stubborn, apostate = All these words describe someone who is in the habit of resisting God's will.)

All these words describe someone who is in the habit of resisting God's will.

They were in the HABIT of resisting God's will. This is not a one time sin. This is not an accidental heat-of-the-moment sin. This is a pattern of intentional sin against the authority of God.

Isaiah 30, verse 1 is also a warning to us. We can easily fall into habits of sin, habits of resisting God's will. And once we form a habit of resisting, it makes repenting all the harder. It isn't the sins we don't commit that tempt us most. It is the sins we commit repeatedly that are the hardest to resist.

Dr. Dobson, in his book THE STRONG-WILLED CHILD, groups children into one of two groups. Either they are compliant, being for the most part obedient to parents, or they are strong-willed, consistently resisting the authority of the parents. Perhaps you have seen such a pattern in your child, a friend's child, or maybe it was your pattern growing up.

We can also use this description of someone in their relationship to God. Are you habitually resisting God's authority? Do you persist in your refusal to repent of any known sin? I want to give you some help in discovering any habitual sin tendencies.

Do you regularly experience any of the following thoughts? You may be habitually resisting the leading of the Holy Spirit:

"I should have _____." **But you don't stop and go back and do it.** So just a moment ago you should have done it the right way, but you did not. Nor did you stop and go back and do it the right way. The Holy Spirit convicted you of sinning and you recognized that, and you refused to repent. Do you see this pattern concerning any subject, any temptation in your life? Have you formed a pattern or habit of resisting God?

"I should have closed the door. I should have taken out the trash. I should have done my chore. I should have apologized. I should have lent a hand." But you didn't go back and do so.

"I better _____." **But you don't.** You know you should, but you don't.

"I have to remember to _____." **But you don't write it down.** And then you forget, often until it is too late.

"I should not _____." **But you do it anyway.**

Then there are excuses we tell ourselves. Are you guilty of any of these?

"No one will know." **But, of course, God will know.** You are trying to excuse your sin.

"It's not hurting anyone." **It hurts your relationship to God.** This is an attempt to justify your sin.

"Well, I don't see anything wrong with it." **That does not mean it is okay.**

"It's not that bad." **This means it is still a little bad, a sin none-the-less.**

"I probably shouldn't say this, but _____." **And you say it anyway.**

In addition to these, maybe there is another excuse for sin that you have been telling yourself. Listen, sin is sin. There is no acceptable excuse for sin.

Every follower of Jesus Christ is supposed to be learning to put sin to death in us. That means calling on God for strength to resist sin instead of making excuses for it. Quit making excuses. Quit resisting the Holy Spirit. Quit hurting your Savior. He is trying to lead you in paths of righteousness, of faithfulness, of holiness.

Invitation

If you are not a follower of Jesus, the most serious sin is your refusal to humble yourself before God and receive Jesus as your savior and Lord. It is for this sin that you will be thrown into the lake of fire with those Scribes and Pharisees that Jesus warned. All of your excuses will seem pretty empty on that day.

Do not do this to yourself. Humble yourself before God today and receive Jesus as your savior and Lord. Christian are you in the habit of resisting sin or resisting God?