

Truth Matters! 5

Have You Been Attributing Biblical Definitions To End-Time Terms?

Allow us to begin with a transferable example. Many debate the biblical account of creation. Actually, many of the issues concerning biblical creation are resolved in the text itself, IF we are sincerely going to the text to get its version of the creation account. In other words, the Progressive Creationists, Theistic Evolutionists, Day-Agers, *Genesis Code* theorists, etc. are simply not letting the text speak for itself. The way the passage is constructed answers many of their false claims.

But how can this debate be happening given the parameter of meaning attributed to the word *day*? Good question. There is indeed a range of meaning in this term. A dictionary inquiry demonstrates this. So as to consult an authoritative source, the following definitions are quotes from Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (Second Edition). The word "day" can be "the period of light between sunrise and sunset," or it can be "the time (24 hours) that it takes the earth to revolve once on its axis." But there are other definitions tied to this word. It can simply mean "a particular or specified day," or even carry the meaning "a period of time." There are actually nine meanings listed for the term day in this dictionary.

So is that it? Are we left to the broad dictionary definitions for the term, or do other determinants exist that help us to further narrow the intended meaning? As we attribute definitions to words given the context in which they are found, so too are we able to observe the word "day" in its biblical context. The word is specifically defined to mean, "an evening and morning," in addition to the numbering of the sequential days totaling six. We find a context that demands a six evening-and-morning-day creation. God defines His terms. It really doesn't get any clearer than this. If this revelation from God is rejected, for any reason, the issue is not clear because the conclusions fall back on man's opinions. For those who do accept God's revealed account, we find great blessing. For additional evidences pointing to His glorious handiwork, view the media presentations, *Unlocking the Mystery of Life* and *The Privileged Planet* by Illustra Media. Oops, I'm off my point, sorry.

As the arguments have been answered in the biblical text regarding the issue of a literal six-day creation, so too have major end-time questions been answered as a result of key terms also being defined. The Bible defines terms in similar ways all other literary works define the terms used. As it defines the term "day" in Genesis, so too does it define terms related to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The definition of the word **and** the context in which it is used are crucial in determining the term's intended meaning.

Four terms come to mind that are often redefined today for the purpose of defending a particular (and faulty) end-time position. While the comments below are only introductions to the appeal to allow terms their proper definitions, the material below does serve as an important beginning into the investigation.

Imminent This term has falsely been given the definition that nothing has to take place before the event of the rapture of the church. This definition fails on two accounts. **First**, a dictionary definition will not yield this narrow meaning. Using the same dictionary mentioned above, here's the definition: "likely to happen without delay; threatening: said of danger, evil, misfortune, etc." The American Heritage Dictionary (Second College Edition) gives this definition: "About to occur; impending." Simple observation discerns a redefinition of this term by those who would add to the meaning of the term the idea that nothing must happen before an *imminent* event occurs. This is a willful distortion for the purpose of advancing a particular position. But there's another problem with this narrow definition. **Second**, the biblical contexts do not support the false definition where these words are used (NB: the word "imminent" itself is seldom used in these so-called imminent [as some narrowly define imminent] passages! Instead, the words and phrases, "watch," "be ready," "look for," "wait," "at the doors," "the Lord comes as a thief," "draws near" and others are used.). For a longer address on the error of this definition of imminent and the end-time doctrine tied thereto, see our *Confronting Traditions* article at <http://www.truthfoundations.org/lcid4.pdf>. (While we at Endurance Ministries, Inc. are not Post-Tribulationist in position because of the incomplete interpretation of/faulty end-time rendering of Daniel's Seventieth Week by most Pre-Millennial chronologies, we, 1. are Pre-Millennial, we, 2. believe God's people in Jesus Christ will be present during the tribulation period where the wrath of a world following the leadership of the antichrist will bring a time of persecution against God's people like never before, and, we 3. discern the Scriptures to teach the final-trumpet rapture of the church. See Matthew 24:29 – 31; I Corinthians 15:51,52; I Thessalonians 4:13 – 18; Revelation 11:15 – 19 and Revelation 14:14 – 16.) This term *imminent* must be defined biblically, not by a theological tradition having no explicit biblical grounds justifying its position.

Return The Return of Jesus Christ is also clearly defined within the pages of the New Testament. While we accept the many passages in the New Testament that speak to the soon-coming of Jesus Christ, fact remains that God's timetable is not usually ours and, in relation to His plan for the ages, Jesus Christ has not yet returned. Some say He has. Once again, a definition of the term and looking at the biblical data in context lead us to conclude that His return is yet future. If seekers of truth bow to the (clearly-contrary-to-the-text) false interpretations that would discourage readiness, there remains no better source to inform on these crucial matters. What, are we once again going to make the mistake of putting our trust in the opinions of men? God forbid! Instead, continue looking to the Scriptures which are able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and which will truthfully inform about the days ahead.

Tribulation Some would define the tribulation period as God's wrath. Once again, the looking up of the term in a dictionary will bring helpful clarification. In addition to this inquiry, also read the passages in the New Testament that speak to the tribulation period of Matthew 24 because, once again, terms are defined in the context in which they are found. The tribulation period outlined in Matthew 24 is never said to be God's wrath. Also read the Old Testament passages that also address a period of trouble upon the earth. A careful reading will once again bring helpful clarification. God's Word is unfolding today like never before, both in events mentioned therein and in our understanding of these present-day passages. It's a wonderful day in which to live.

Wrath Be ever so careful here. Look up the term in both a standard dictionary and a Bible dictionary. In fact, looking into the other terms listed above should also include a visit to your Bible dictionary. It's important to bring a biblical definition to the terms today because some terms are being redefined to cater to the worldly agenda (e.g., marriage!). After looking up the dictionary definitions of this term—repetition for the sake of emphasis—then go on to study the use of the term in its context. This will provide you with a wonderful eye-opening journey into the Truths God has revealed will unfold in the days ahead. Again, it is precious to see how God's Word continues to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Remember that darkness twists things, so be careful to allow the text to speak for itself. Because we are who we are, ask the Lord for His help to better understand the passages through His Holy Spirit's illumination. He is providing insight today in very impressive ways. God is good!

While the appeals above could be further developed (you don't say!), sufficient encouragement toward the end of gleaning from God's precious Word has been offered. As you continue to remain and endure in the Author and Finisher of our faith, abide in Him through regular time in His Word. Psalm 1 promises many blessings. As you encounter important words in your reading, be sure to look these terms up (in both English and Bible dictionaries) AND read them in the setting of their context while allowing the passages to speak for themselves. When this occurs, some popular end-time positions fall by the wayside.

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