5

History and Culture in Exegesis: You Can't Eat a Denarius

Supplemental Materials

For this chapter, there are three sections of supplemental material. Two of them deal with word studies, as a form of historical exegesis, and one deals with a more "properly" historical-cultural—or even social—issue.

Section one represents an extended presentation of the advantages, dangers and execution of word studies. It greatly elaborates on sidebar 5.1 in the textbook, since the scope of the textbook does not leave enough room for a more complete treatment. The supplemental material draws from a number of other discussions, especially from James Barr's famous *Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford, 1962). Other sources not only of general warnings and suggestions but also of specific examples (only some of which are my own) include works by Moisés Silva, Eugene Nida, D. A. Carson, D. A. Black, John Beekman and John Callow, and Anthony Thiselton. Those who are familiar with "the literature" will recognize the shamelessly liberal borrowing; those who are not familiar with these treatments are encouraged to consult the textbook's bibliography for suggestions on further pursuit of this important subject.

Once some fundamental principles have been set out, section one offers a sample word study on the term ἱλασμός "propitiation, expiation, sacrifice" in 1 John.

Section two follows up the presentation in section one. Users are invited to try their hands at applying word-study strategy to a half-dozen terms from the letter to Philemon. For comparison, my own brief treatments of these terms are provided in the following pages, each one emphasizing whatever aspects of word-study technique are suitable to its particular case. For the sixth term, γνώμη "opinion, plan, consent," a full concordance of its occurrences in the LXX and New Testament is also provided.
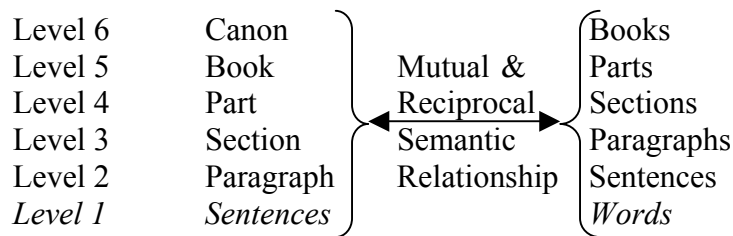
Section three, finally, takes up the historical-cultural issue of the Roman institution of slavery and considers it in connection with the agenda of the letter to Philemon.

I. Word Studies: Lexicons, Concordances and Cautions

A. Word Studies Can Provide Useful Information Not Otherwise Available to Us.

Theology, the Bible's message, is described in statements and in clusters of statements, not in individual words. That is, the term δικαιοσύνη "righteousness" does not "contain" within itself a theology of righteousness. Only the sentences and larger texts using that word—and many other words related to it and interacting with it—can express such a theology. For this reason, a series of word studies can*not* add up to a clear expression of a text's message. Yet, word studies can provide information helpful to us in understanding the meaning of sentences and larger stretches of text.

As the textbook frequently emphasizes, there is a mutual, reciprocal (somewhat circular) semantic relationship at any given level of textual analysis. This relationship exists, for example, between the meaning of a whole book and the meanings of the parts that make it up. Likewise, at a "lower" level, the same mutuality and reciprocity exist between the meaning of a paragraph and the meanings of its component sentences. That is to say, the meaning of a paragraph depends in part on the meaning of its sentences; by the same token, the meaning of any of its sentences is in part dependent on the total meaning of the paragraph. Not surprisingly then, this is also the case between the meaning of a sentence and the meanings of the words that belong to it. This is another way of talking about levels of literary context. We can diagram these levels of semantic mutuality like this:

Level 6	Canon		Books
Level 5	Book	Mutual &	Parts
Level 4	Part	Reciprocal	Sections
Level 3	Section	Semantic	Paragraphs
Level 2	Paragraph	Relationship	Sentences
Level 1	*Sentences*		*Words*

Some words are "structure words" or function words (conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, etc.). They indicate the relationships within and between units of language. Most words, however, are "content words" (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.). Word studies can be done on both types, though it is perhaps the content words that are most often studied this way.

Languages tend to be only as specific and unambiguous as they need to be in order to ensure communication. Correspondingly, they tend to economize by using the same item in several different ways. This means that most words have a *range* of meanings and applications. For example, how many different "meanings" can you think of for the English "word" pronounced *rēd?* What about for the word *post?*

The ambiguity of language and various other factors can make verbal communication tricky. It is not always clear to us what a speaker or writer belonging to our *own* language and culture means by what he or she says. Those of us who are married can testify to this! Matters get further complicated when the message comes from another language and

culture for which there are no living representatives, as is the case with the Bible. Add to that situation the fact that even the translations of biblical messages into our own language, for many of us, can remain unintelligible. This is often the case with technical, theological jargon using words like *righteousness, justification, transgression, anointing, propitiation, expiation, seven-headed beast from the sea,* etc. Some of us may think we know what those words mean, although we can be stumped when someone asks us! But pity the poor souls who read their Bibles without any understanding of such unfamiliar imagery and vocabulary.

That is a dismal enough thought, but what about ordinary words, words which are all too familiar? Words like *fox, head, poor?* In fact, the more familiar the image, the more danger there is of our distorting its originally intended sense: we feel no need to check beyond our own assurance of familiarity. Consider these examples:

> *Fox* (Lk 13:32): What does Jesus mean when he calls Herod "that fox"? Ordinarily when we use the term that way, we mean a person who is sly, crafty or sneaky. Is that what first-century Palestinians meant? What does verse 31 suggest as a possible alternative? How would we go about testing a hypothesis?
>
> *Poor* (Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20): How would a conservative Republican Christian interpret the word "poor" in these texts? How might the Reverend Jesse Jackson do it? How did Jesus (Matthew/Luke) mean it? How can we find out?
>
> *Head* (Eph 5:22-23): How might a macho, hyper-conservative male-domination advocate take the meaning of *head* here? How might a militant feminist Christian? How did Paul mean it? (Check Eph 5:21 and 25 for clues.)

So then, even though mere word studies will not provide us with clear statements of the biblical message, the meaning of many biblical texts is obscured by words either strange to us or used in ways unfamiliar to us. Word studies can help clarify those words and their usage and thereby contribute to our grasp of the sentences and larger texts those words belong to.

B. Still, There Are Dangerous Assumptions and Pitfalls to Avoid.

Before we try to solve word-problems like these, however, it is very important to be aware of some of the dangers involved. As good reading on these dangers, I recommend J. Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* and D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (chap. 1). Good sources for guidance in doing responsible word studies include the short section in G. D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook*, Black, *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek* (chap. 5), and Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meaning*. (Cf. the textbook's bibliography.)

1. *Avoid the dangers of etymologizing.* Etymology is the study of words from the perspective of their root forms and their historical usage. Webster's dictionary and others like it often give etymological information for words in addition to defining them. This

kind of information is a favorite with preachers and Bible teachers, because it is easy to produce and can sound impressive. But it is also easy to misuse the information in ways that obscure or distort the Bible's message rather than illuminating it.

a. Avoid searching for the "basic, root, or 'original' meaning" of a word as if it were discoverable, or as if it were relevant even if discovered. For instance, the English word *nice* can be traced back through Middle English ("foolish, stupid"), to Old French ("silly, simple") to Latin *nescius*, which means "ignorant, incapable." How helpful is that for understanding the modern English sentence *She is such a nice person*? Or take Paul's words to the Corinthians, urging them to consider him, Cephas, Apollos, etc., as ὑπηρέτας "servants" of Christ (1 Cor 4:1). Some scholars reason that this word is a combination of ὑπό "under" and ἐρέτης (from ἐρέσσω "to row"), meaning an "under-rower" in a three-tiered Roman galley—like the sort Ben Hur worked on as a slave—and thus metaphorically a very lowly sort of servant. While it might have carried that meaning in some contexts, most often—even in Classical Greek—it simply meant a servant, an assistant, such as an armor-bearer for a warrior. Paul likely did not have Greek galleys in mind when he used the word in 1 Corinthians.

b. Similarly, avoid dividing words into their component parts and then adding them up again to arrive at the "true" meaning. A frequently cited example is ἐκκλησία "church," which is said to come from ἐκ "out" and καλέω "call"; thus, ἐκκλησία "really" means "the called-out ones." As far as we know, however, no biblical or nonbiblical author ever uses the term ἐκκλησία to mean "the ones called out" of something. We distort the Bible's message when we foist on New Testament writers this clever, but inaccurate, interpretation of the word. The church is indeed called out, in some theological sense, but the etymology of this word does not prove it.

c. Avoid assuming that only etymologically related words are relevant to each other. For instance, γινώσκω, ἐπιγινώσκω, γνῶσις, γνωρίζω ("know, recognize, knowledge, make known") are etymologically related through sharing the morpheme γνο- (cf. English *kno-*). But to concentrate only on such words as a way of learning about the New Testament "concept" of knowledge would be to miss out on much important information provided by other words, which are just as relevant to that idea, maybe even more so. Such other words would include οἶδα, καρδία, βλέπω, μανθάνω, συνίημι, καταλαμβάνω, δοκιμάζω ("know, heart, see, learn, understand, grasp, test"), etc. Louw and Nida's "domain" dictionary goes a long way toward rectifying this error in traditional dictionaries and word studies.

2. *Avoid getting language structure confused with thought structure.*

a. *With respect to a language's stock of vocabulary:* The fact that the Greeks had two terms for flesh and body, σάρξ and σῶμα, while Hebrew had only one, *baṣar*, does not imply that the Hebrews saw no distinction between the body and its constitutive material.

b. *With respect to a language's grammatical structure:* It cannot be concluded that God is feminine simply because the Hebrew term *ruaḥ* "spirit" is feminine; nor is he

masculine because he is referred to with a masculine pronoun. Turkish has no gender; even its pronouns do not distinguish gender. French, on the other hand, classifies every noun as either feminine or masculine. But this does not mean that the French are naturally erotic, nor that the Turks cannot tell "the difference." The fact that πέτρα "rock" in Matthew 16:18 is feminine does not mean it cannot refer to Peter, though some anti-papists have argued this. Some people may wish to argue that Jesus does not refer to papal succession in this text, but they cannot legitimately do so based on the gender of πέτρα.

3. *Avoid getting concepts confused with the words that refer to them.* Words *refer* to concepts; they do not *contain* them. The word θεός in the New Testament *means* the same thing there as it does in Plato, "a supernatural, divine being." Its *reference*, however—what it refers to—is different in the New Testament from what it is in Plato. Paul and Jesus use the word to refer to the God of Israel; presumably, Plato did not. *Reference* and *meaning* are two different things.

Special dangers in this category (according to James Barr) include

a. The "illegitimate totality transfer." This happens when we look up every occurrence of, say, σάρξ "flesh" and assume that the sum total of all its possible meanings is present in its every occurrence. The word σάρξ is used in the New Testament to refer to a wide variety of "concepts," some of which are profoundly associated with evil. But that does not mean that evil is a necessary attribute of all the concepts to which σάρξ refers (see 4.a, below).

b. The "illegitimate identity transfer." This happens when we assume that because two items are referred to by the same word, they are essentially the same concept. Or we may assume the reverse, that because several words can refer to one item, those words all have essentially the same meaning, or that they always refer to the same concept. The expressions "morning star" and "evening star" have quite different meanings, even though both refer to the planet Venus. The great "Kittel" dictionary (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [10 vols.], or *TDNT*) is prone to this sort of error, especially in its earlier volumes. This leads us to the danger of ignoring context.

4. *Avoid ignoring context.*

a. In general, the meaning of a given word in a given context will be *the least rich meaning—the least full meaning*—necessary for that word to make sense in that context, except in the case of a pun. That is, unless the author is deliberately being coy or is simply inept at verbal communication, we can assume that the context will eliminate all possible senses but one for a potentially ambiguous item.

b. Thus, taking account of the context in which we find an actual occurrence of a word is decisive for determining the word's meaning in that context. From the range of the word's possible senses (sometimes quite many!), a single context will select the one it requires and eliminate all the others. For example, the term *Queen Anne*: (i) *Queen Anne*

had *a very nice place to live* (as opposed to King Alfred) *vs.* (ii) *Queen Anne* is *a very nice place to live* (as opposed to Magnolia). And of course, sentence (ii) makes sense only in the context of Seattle, where Queen Anne and Magnolia are separate neighborhoods.

Recognizing the city of Seattle as an "extra-textual" context implies that, similarly, the context of the listener is also important. The word κύων generally means "dog" in Greek. But what would Revelation 22:15 mean to people who never use dogs for metaphors? They would wonder why poor dogs are grouped with those evildoers. Or what would it mean to people who do use dogs in metaphors but only for *positive* metaphors of faithfulness, loyalty and companionship?

c. To sum up, then: Context eliminates possible meanings. It is not so much a matter of words *containing* meanings or concepts, as it is of words *referring to* meanings or concepts. The following symbols and words—*water, H_2O, de l'eau, agua, mizu, Wasser, vatten, ὑδώρ* —do not "mean" each other, nor do they "contain" the idea of what we English speakers call "water." Rather they all *refer to* (or can be used to refer to) that probably trans-cultural and trans-lingual concept, "water."

We saw above (with the word *post*, for example) that one word can have several quite different meanings and that this is due to the economizing nature of language. If it were not so, every word in the vocabulary of a language would be a technical term, and the vocabulary would be hopelessly massive and cumbersome. We would usually not be able to say what we wanted to say because we would not know all the necessary words, and even if we did, few if any people would be able to understand us because *they* would not be able to remember the meaning of all those words.

As with *post*, therefore, we can come up with several meanings for any number of words, including the following: *club, pride, for/four/fore*? Which of the possible meanings a word actually "has" (that is, "refers to") in a given context depends on that context. Context helps the listener or reader decide which meaning or concept, from among the many possible, a word is actually referring to *here, in this particular utterance.*

Here are some more examples [NOTE: slashes (//) around a word mean "pronounce it like this no matter how it's actually spelled"]:

> *The /karz/ got off the /färee/...*
> > a. *and she flew away.*
> > b. *and walked all the way home.*
> > c. *and drove off the dock.*

The three "contexts" (a, b, c) each eliminate various possible senses of both nouns. You may have to use your imagination, but the point should be clear. Context (a) makes */färee/* refer to Tinkerbell or some other tiny winged creature, and */karz/* to a little family of "borrower" children named Carr. Context (b)—ignoring undue influence from context

(a)—suggests that the Carr family were foot passengers on a ferryboat. Context (c), too, refers to a ferryboat, but now cars, rather than trucks and motorcycles, are in view.

The same kind of sense-selection process happens with related words occurring in close proximity (which is another way of saying "in context"):

> *Ear* vs. *stalk, silk, tassel, husk, kernel, cob*
> *Ear* vs. *eye, nose, throat, mouth*
> *Ear* vs. *attention, inattention, discernment*

And compare John 1:14, "The Word became flesh" with Luke 24:39, "A spirit does not have flesh and bones." How are these two uses of σάρξ different from each other, and how can we tell the difference?

C. The Goal of a Word Study Is to Reveal the Options.

The goal of a word study is to reveal not only the options available to the contemporary exegete but especially those available to the ancient author. Take the exegete's case first.

1. The exegete needs to know the various senses a particular word might have.

We can go back to the Greek noun σάρξ. Depending on its context, this term can be translated by a wide range of English glosses: flesh, body, sinful nature, human race, ethnic group or blood relative, and so on. That is, it can represent a range of semantic "senses," according to need. Although the range of possibilities may be broader than that of some other Greek nouns, it is not *unlimited*. Σάρξ is not used to refer to the notion of forgiveness, for example. It is extremely useful, not to say essential, for an exegete to be aware of the variety of ways a given word can be used.

BDAG is the tool of choice for getting a grip on this variety. To see what I mean, look up the article on σάρξ and browse through it. Of course, any lexicon, including BDAG, depends on a *concordance* for the raw material underlying its conclusions. We can use a concordance ourselves to compile our own raw material for a word study. Once we see the possibilities, we can begin to analyze how a particular context *eliminates* possible senses, usually all but one.

2. The exegete benefits from knowing what other words the author might have used in this context.

It helps in analyzing what an author might have meant by using a particular word, like σάρξ, if we can figure out what other words he might have used instead, at least for that context. Could he have substituted ἄνθρωποι "human beings"? Or what about ἁμαρτία "sin"? We can learn much about the meaning of a given occurrence of a word if we can compile a list (a "paradigm") of alternative words (or phrases) for that context. Even antonyms or words for related ideas are helpful, not just synonyms. One way we define what "car" means is to observe that its opposite in a particular context is "truck" rather than "stairway" (as in "Take Car 4 to the 37th floor.").

For seeing a list of potential other words an author might have used, we now have a truly useful tool in the "domain" dictionary edited by Louw and Nida.

A word study is not a decisive, foolproof means of answering all our questions. We have immediate cause for suspicion if someone says, "Now, in the Greek, this special word means . . . ." What word studies do for us is to help us see just what we are dealing with. They help us make better decisions than we would have ability to do without them. But many other considerations must come into play in the process. The following sample study demonstrates this.

D. A Sample Exercise in Using the Tools for a Word Study: Propitiation or Expiation or What?

1. Use a variety of translations.

Compare these several different renderings of the Greek term ἱλασμός in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10:

KJV:	propitiation (*also* Moffatt, Vulgate)
RSV:	expiation
NRSV:	atoning sacrifice
Phillips:	one who makes personal atonement
Good News:	means by which our sins are forgiven (*also* Dios llega al hombre)
Gute Nachricht:	offering to take away/forgive our guilt (*also* Les bonnes nouvelles)
Louis Segond:	expiatory victim
Living Bible:	forgiveness for our sins; that which satisfies God's wrath/anger against our sins; atoning sacrifice
Luther Bibel:	reconciliation for our sins (*also* Hedegård's colloquial Swedish version)
Swedish 2000:	offering that compensates for our sins

A brief survey of translations, like this one, is itself a handy tool for doing at least part of a word study. For one thing, it can provide a useful starting point by highlighting the very fact that there is ambiguity in the text and that that ambiguity is associated with the possibilities available for a particular word. It also can provide a beginning list of those possibilities, that is, a preliminary view of the *range* of meanings for that word.

2. Use lexicons.

Next we may check the entry for ἱλασμός in BDAG as the standard New Testament Greek lexicon. It offers a great deal besides merely the *glosses* "expiation" and "sin-offering," and the not-too-helpful remark that for 1 John either of these "meanings" is possible. A third gloss, "propitiation," is implied for this word in BDAG's next entry ἱλαστήριον, and was in fact included under ἱλασμός in earlier editions of BDAG.

Lexicons (or "lexica," the Greek plural) come designed for particular bodies, or corpora (Latin plural for *corpus*), of literature. They list in alphabetical order all of the vocabulary for a given corpus, and for each word they usually provide either glosses or definitions— sometimes both—often without distinguishing them. A *definition* is a description of the meaning of a word, or rather of the concept to which the word can be used to refer. For example, a definition for the word *knife* might be "a small instrument for cutting, made of a single blade and a handle." A *gloss*, on the other hand, is simply another word—one from the same language or from another language (depending on the nature of the lexicon or dictionary). For example, a typical English gloss for the Greek word ἱκανός might be "sufficient," whereas its English *definition* might be "of a nature or quality equal to expectation, standard or requirement." A major advance in BDAG (2000) over its earlier English editions (1957, 1979) is its conscious and regular use of definitions.

For ἱλασμός in 1 John, then, what do we make of these options? What, for instance, is the difference between propitiation and expiation? (This question might lead us temporarily to an English dictionary like Webster's, depending on how familiar we are with our own language!) What is at stake in choosing between them? How does the choice reflect on "John's" view of God?

3. *Use concordances.*

A simple concordance search will help us to determine the most likely choice among the options the lexicon gives us. It will not necessarily settle the issue forever, but it helps.

Concordances are selective or exhaustive, and alphabetized, lists of the vocabulary for a given body (or "corpus") of literature, the Greek New Testament for instance. Under each word's entry, a concordance lists all (or a selection) of that word's occurrences in that corpus, usually in "canonical" order. In electronic concordances, such as Gramcord, BibleWorks or Logos, alphabetization and, to some extent, canonical ordering are not necessary. Concordances are extremely useful tools, not only for word studies, but for a variety of other kinds of analysis, too—finding the source of a New Testament allusion to the Old Testament, for example.

Any good Greek New Testament concordance reveals that the word ἱλασμός occurs *only* at 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 in the New Testament. Strong's or Young's English concordances of the Bible will tell us the same thing, only in a more roundabout way. So does BDAG, the lexicon. BDAG also tells us whether (and often where) the word occurs in classical Greek texts and in the Septuagint (LXX).

The standard lexicon for classical Greek (Liddell, Scott and Jones, or LSJ) lists definitions/glosses for ἱλασμός such as "a means of appeasing, a propitiation, a sacrifice." This focus on anger appeasement perhaps makes sense in pagan religion, where gods are conceived of as angry and in need of "propitiation."

The LXX usage will likely have more in common with the New Testament—and specifically Johannine—usage than classical Greek usage will, since the LXX was

presumably "John's" Bible. We can find the LXX occurrences of ἱλασμός, of course, by using a concordance for the Septuagint. (The old standard is Hatch and Redpath, but similar results are available from computer-based search tools.)

Look up in your English Old Testament the following passages where the LXX uses the term ἱλασμός, remembering that the term will not necessarily always render the same Hebrew word. Give yourself a chance to "analyze" them on your own before you consult the "results" provided below. If you have Hebrew, check out the Hebrew originals here.

> Leviticus 25:9
> Numbers 5:8
> Psalm 130:4
> Ezekiel 44:27
> Amos 8:14
> Daniel 9:9
> 1 Chronicles 28:20
>
> *   *   *

4. *Analyze the results of a concordance search.*

Keep in mind that the LXX contains widely varying translation styles. This means that the usage of any given Greek word in the LXX will not necessarily be matched one-to-one with a corresponding Hebrew word in the Masoretic Text (MT; the text of the Old Testament as preserved in most current Hebrew Bibles). This is certainly true of ἱλασμός. In fact, just in the "canonical" portion of the Old Testament the seven occurrences of the word translate four different Hebrew terms, and behind one of these seven there is no Hebrew text at all. (In the Apocrypha, or "deutero-canonical" portion of the Old Testament, the term occurs only in 2 Macc 3:33, which does not exist in an "original" Hebrew version.)

> Leviticus 25:9 and Numbers 5:8 both use ἱλασμός (singular) to translate the word כפרים (*kippurim*) "atonement" as in "Day *of Atonement*" and "ram *of atonement.*"
>
> Psalm 129 (130):4 translates the Hebrew term סל יחה (*seliḥah*) as "pardon, forgiveness." The plural οἱ ἱλασμοί is used in Theodotion's second-century revision of Daniel 9:9 LXX to translate the same term.
>
> Ezekiel 44:27 uses the word to translate the Hebrew term חטאה (*ḥattah*) "sin, transgression" in the sense of *offering for* sin, that is, "sin-offering, atonement."
>
> Amos 8:14 translates (or *mis*translates?) the Hebrew אשמה (*asmah*) "idol, guilt, shame," used ironically to refer to the goddess Ashera of Samaria.
>
> The word ἱλασμός also appears in a longer ending to 1 Chronicles 28:20, found in some LXX manuscripts. But there is no known Hebrew text behind it. It occurs there in the expression "house of atonement," referring to the temple that Solomon would build.

So, what can we conclude from the use of ἱλασμός in the LXX? It has an abstract sense of "atonement" (as in "Day of..." [Lev 25:9] or "ram of..." [Num 5:8]). This same abstract notion may be seen in both 2 Maccabees 3:33 (where a priest "makes atonement") and in a *v.l.* (*varia lectio*, "variant reading") for 1 Chronicles 28:20, referring to Solomon's (future) temple as the "house of atonement." The word can also be used in a concrete sense of the physically visible, tangible offering to restore relations with God (for a defiled priest, Ezek 44:27). It can likewise be used to refer to the abstract mercy or forgiveness of God in contrast to human iniquity (Ps 129 [130]:4), and in describing God's nature, as in Theodotion's revision of Daniel 9:9. Amos 8:14 appears to be a mistranslation based on a misunderstanding of Amos' sense of irony, and it can be ignored.

5. *Use "theological dictionaries" and other resources.*

We could also at this point do several more things, such as checking appropriate articles in the "Kittel" theological dictionary and the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* edited by Colin Brown. We could consider other words closely related to ἱλασμός (both etymologically and—using, e.g., Louw and Nida—semantically), and we could consult various monographs (e.g., L. Morris, *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*) and any number of journal articles.

Theological dictionaries can be excellent sources of an enormous amount of information. They can also be misleading, because they are based on the mistaken notion that theology can be discerned through word studies. Use them with care, remembering to keep in mind the cautions and pitfalls discussed above, and above all to return always to the "sense-restricting" context you are actually dealing with.

6. *Draw some conclusions for your particular context.*

Given what we have so far, what can we say about the way the term ἱλασμός is used in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10? Always, the question needs to return to the context from which it arose. Moisés Silva (*Biblical Words and Their Meaning*) reminds us that context is a multifaceted phenomenon, like a set of concentric circles. Like ripples from a stone dropped in a pond, these circles of context move outward from the immediate sentence or paragraph, to the section or chapter, to the book, to the New Testament as a whole, to the general cultural-religious environment (including particularly the Old Testament). The rule of thumb about this is that the *smaller* the contextual circles are, the *more crucial* they are for the meaning of elements within them.

It looks as if all three major LXX senses for ἱλασμός appear among the various translations listed above under C.1. Only one of them, however, compares well with the uses of the term in 1 John. Two features of the wording in those two New Testament texts are contextually significant. For one thing, it is Jesus the man, the *person*, who is said *to be the* ἱλασμός for our sins. Second, the text says that God sent him *to be the* ἱλασμός for our sins. These two facts suggest that the concrete sense of a physically visible, tangible offering for sin is the most appropriate meaning in 1 John. I used to think that "atonement," as in the expression "ram of atonement," was a better fit, until I realized that in that expression, while "ram" corresponds to Jesus as a living being, the term ἱλασμός refers to the abstract concept, and not to the ram itself. But in 1 John, the word ἱλασμός refers precisely to Jesus as the sacrificial offering, the "thing" offered. *This immediate context, this "smallest contextual circle," is the most important factor to consider in narrowing the choices for the sense of ἱλασμός here.*

So although there is much more we could consider, we can probably say with some confidence that the best *gloss* of the term in 1 John 2:2, 4:10 is "sacrificial offering." An appropriate *definition* for the word in this context—that is, the concept to which it refers there—might be: "that which is offered sacrificially to a deity in consideration of something." In this case, the "something in consideration of which" is further specified with περί as "our sins and the sins of the whole world."

As abstract notions, however, neither "expiation" nor "propitiation" fits better here than "sacrificial offering" does. Indeed, the fact that it is God's own idea, arising out of his love for us, that he sends his Son to be that sacrificial offering suggests that "propitiation" is less appropriate than "expiation." But in this context, that debate is probably moot. Amazingly, a lot of intellectual "blood" has been spilled over whether "expiation" or "propitiation" is truer to the Word of God—unnecessarily for this text, anyway, as it seems to me. In this regard, it is intriguing that the RSV, which in 1952 so provocatively introduced "expiation" in place of the KJV's "propitiation," has now evolved into the NRSV, which uses the more contextually appropriate "atoning sacrifice."

II. Word-Study Process Applied to Philemon 8-16

Several words in this text might be regarded as needing further attention. The Greek term is followed by its gloss in the NRSV:

1. παρρησία "[I am] bold [enough]" (v. 8): What is the precise nuance in this context?

2. πρεσβύτης "an old man" (v. 9): What is the point here of Paul's calling himself an old man?

3. ἄχρηστος "useless" and εὔχρηστος "useful" (v. 11): Their connection with the name Ὀνήσιμος [meaning "useful"]?

4. παρακαλεῖν περί "appeal for," ἀναπέμπειν "send back"(vv. 10, 12): Technical, legal terms?

5. σάρξ "flesh" (v. 16): What sense of σάρξ?

6. γνώμη "consent" (v. 14): What is the precise nuance in this context?

Select one or more of these six "word-study problems" and apply whatever techniques you need for solving them, using hints from the preceding discussion. When you are ready, compare your results with the suggested solutions on the following pages. Note that for problem 6, a full biblical concordance for the word γνώμη is offered below. Help yourself.

Here are suggested solutions to the problems posed on the preceding page.

1. παρρησία is used in the New Testament and LXX in the senses of "openness," "frankness," "boldness" and "confidence." Here in Philemon 8 it forms part of the contrast between Paul's *commanding* Philemon in παρρησία and his *appealing* to him on the basis of love. This seems to call for a sense of "boldness" or "confidence," such that Paul has full confidence in his right simply to command Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother. The "clue" lies in the meaning of the alternative approach Paul proposes as possible.

2. There is speculation either that the text has changed in verse 9 from reading πρεσβευτής "ambassador" to reading πρεσβύτης "old man," or that the latter is simply a misspelling of the former. Yet, it is hard to see how the reading "ambassador" advances the argument (that is, it can make sense here, but how does it function in the argument?). On the other hand, there is no other sense available for πρεσβύτης than "old man." Thus the question about Paul's point in referring to himself as an old man here cannot be answered on the basis of a word study.

3. Since the name Ὀνήσιμος is simply a word for "useful, profitable" (though it does not appear as the ordinary word in the LXX, New Testament or the other early Christian literature surveyed by BDAG), it appears that the use of the terms ἄχρηστος "useless" and εὔχρηστος "useful" are intended as puns or wordplays on Onesimus' name. It would be interesting to know why the word ὀνήσιμος is not used in our literature (except for the implied sense here). It may also be that Paul is playing on the similarity between the sounds of ἄ-εὔχρηστος (both from χρηστός "useful, beneficial") and Χριστός "Christ," but that seems less likely to me.

4. See reference to this in A. Patzia, "Philemon, Letter to," *DPL* 704-5, and see also the article on ἀναπέμπειν "send up/back" in BDAG. This verb may imply that Paul is keeping Onesimus with him and just sending Philemon a letter requesting his consent (see S. Winter, *New Testament Studies* 33 [1987] 1-15), as if ὃν ἀνέπεμψά σοι, αὐτόν . . . should be rendered, "whose case I now refer to you."

5. See the article on "Flesh," *DPL* 303-6, where σάρξ in Philemon 16 is understood as referring to standard human social relationships (p. 304).

6. See below, the end of the file, for a complete concordance of LXX and New Testament occurrences of γνώμη. BDAG provides occurrences from other early Christian literature.

    In the LXX, the term γνώμη occurs most frequently in Ezra (Esdras II in the LXX, Rahlfs edition) 4-7 (18x), mostly in the sense of an official, royal decree or divine will (usually as object of the verb τίθημι "make"). [It is worth noting that all these LXX Ezra texts correspond to the "original" Aramaic portions of the

book, not to the Hebrew.] Outside of Ezra (5x), it carries the sense of "plan," "scheme," "advice."

In the Old Testament Apocrypha (LXX), the word is used in a range of senses, from "judgment" to "mind," "opinion," "preference," "resolve," "consent," but with no instances of Ezra's "royal decree." Two particularly noteworthy occurrences appear at 1 Esdras 6:21 and 7:5; there the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem is said to progress μετὰ τῆς γνώμης Κύρου [etc.] τοῦ βασιλέως "with the consent of Cyrus the King." This seems to correspond with Paul's use in Philemon 14 with χωρίς: "with/without consent/knowledge." Similarly, consider 2 Maccabees 4:39: μετὰ τῆς τοῦ Μενελάου γνώμης "with the consent of Menelaus." Only, here a negative note may be implied: "connivance."

In the New Testament the sense of γνώμη ranges from "opinion, judgment," to "intention, purpose," to "good opinion, consent." Philemon's *consent* is most likely what Paul is lacking in his desire to keep Onesimus with him to serve him in his bonds.

Louw and Nida's domain dictionary suggests both "opinion" and "consent" as possibilities for Philemon 14, preferring "opinion" (1:366-67). However, if Paul desired to keep Onesimus with himself but would not do so without consulting Philemon, are we to imagine that Paul only wanted to know what Philemon thought about it, and that even if Philemon was opposed to the idea, Paul would have asked him to return Onesimus anyway? It seems more likely that Paul would not have insisted on Onesimus' services if Philemon had not consented.

Assuming this is so, we can also consider other vocabulary of "consent, agreement" listed in Louw and Nida (1:367-69). According to them, γνώμη is one of four abstract nouns among the sixteen items listed, the others being verbs, adverbs or agent nouns. Thus, for this particular syntactical situation, only four items (in New Testament vocabulary) were available: γνώμη, συμφώνησις ("agreement" 2 Cor 6:15), (to;) σύμφωνον ("agreement" 1 Cor 7:5), and συγκατάθεσις ("agreement" 2 Cor 6:16). Apparently, Paul uses γνώμη because of its focus on knowledge, as opposed to the process of coming to agreement or the harmonious relationship implied in the others. This does not mean that he hemmed and hawed over which word to use; likely, he didn't give it a moment's thought.

III. Historical-Cultural Question Applied to Philemon 8-16

What would be an important historical-cultural issue to investigate in connection with Philemon? On the larger historical-cultural backdrop, the issues of slavery and manumission in the Roman world would be obvious candidates. On the more immediate level of the circumstances lying directly behind the letter to Philemon, this would translate into the sociological implications Paul's request would have for the situation reflected there.

Articles in *DPL* on slavery and social settings provide both general information and suggestions for further exploration of these questions. Some helpful historical-cultural perspectives gleaned from those articles include the following:

1.   In the New Testament period, approximately 85-90 percent of the population of peninsular Italy, and probably of the rest of the Empire, consisted of slaves or persons of slave origin.

2.   Slaves were granted many rights by law, including the right to accumulate money of their own, the right to seek outside support in disputes with masters and the right to marry.

3.   According to Roman statesman Cicero (first century B.C.), slaves could expect to be set free within seven years, or at least by age thirty, and most were then granted Roman citizenship.

4.   "Households" mentioned in the New Testament doubtless consisted to a large degree of slaves and other retainers, as well as the "family" proper. These households were usually under the control of the *paterfamilias*.

5.   It was illegal to harbor runaway slaves; they were required to be returned to their rightful owners. (Is this what Paul means in v. 12 by ἀνέπεμψα "I have sent [him] back"?)

From these few hints we can picture Philemon's household in Colossae as probably a wealthy one with more slaves than Onesimus alone. Onesimus had apparently incurred his master's wrath somehow and thus possibly fled to find a go-between in Paul, whom he may have got to know earlier when Paul was in Ephesus. (Alternatively, having run away, he may have accidentally come into contact with Paul, who just happened to know his master.) Asking Paul to serve as an intercessor would have been his (Onesimus's) right by law—and he may have known it. Paul appears to be urging Philemon to manumit Onesimus into Paul's service in the gospel. There may be ironic overtones of Christ's manumission of *Philemon* (through Paul) from slavery to sin and death. At any rate, house-churches would have included slave and free, male and female, perhaps Jew and Gentile, and so on. Yet there would be no guarantee that the ideal values of the gospel that break down the barriers of social strata would have been fully realized in every

Christian household, if in any. Onesimus would still very much have been at the mercy of Philemon.

J. M. G. Barclay argues that the fact that Paul is completely vague and ambiguous about what exactly he wants Philemon to do for Onesimus implies that Paul was unwilling to come right out and suggest that Philemon set Onesimus free. Paul was well aware of the awkward social implications that action would have had for Philemon and his household, not to mention for the church that met in Philemon's house. Not knowing which was better, to manumit or not, Paul counseled neither, leaving it to the Spirit to interpret for Philemon what treating Onesimus in a Christ-like manner would mean in this particular case ("Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991) 161-86).

Sara Winter (*NTS* 33 [1987]: 1-15) believes that the concentration of legal terminology in Philemon supports the theory that Philemon's congregation sent Onesimus to Paul in Ephesus to help him in his house arrest. Paul now requests Philemon *for* Onesimus (not *about* him, v. 10), asking that Onesimus be manumitted so that Paul may keep Onesimus with him as a fellow minister in the gospel at Ephesus, thus asking Philemon to "accept" (v. 17) Onesimus as a fellow *socius* (member) in the *societas* (κοινωνία "organization") which Paul, Philemon and others had formed for the ministry of the gospel. Although Paul preferred to keep Onesimus with him in this way, he also decided to get Philemon's consent (vv. 13-14). But he did not send Onesimus back with the letter; he merely used the letter to "refer (ἀνέπεμψα) his case." This is an interesting theory, but it does not easily explain the "offense" which Onesimus has apparently been to Philemon, and it clashes with Colossians 4:9, though not insurmountably.

Concordance to LXX and New Testament Occurrences of γνώμη

1Es 6:21 καὶ ἐὰν εὑρίσκηται μετὰ τῆς <mark>γνώμης</mark> Κύρου τοῦ βασιλέως γενομένην τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ οἴκου κυρίου τοῦ ἐν Ιερουσαλημ καὶ κρίνηται τῷ κυρίῳ βασιλεῖ ἡμῶν προσφωνησάτω ἡμῖν περὶ τούτων

1Es 7:5 καί μετὰ τῆς <mark>γνώμης</mark> Κύρου καὶ Δαρείου καὶ Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλέως Περσῶν συνετελέσθη ὁ οἶκος ὁ ἅγιος ἕως τρίτης καὶ εἰκάδος μηνὸς Αδαρ τοῦ ἕκτου ἔτους βασιλέως Δαρείου

Ezr 4:19 καὶ παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐτέθη <mark>γνώμης</mark> καὶ ἐπεσκεψάμεθα καὶ εὕραμεν ὅτι ἡ πόλις ἐκείνη ἀφ᾽ ἡμερῶν αἰῶνος ἐπὶ βασιλεῖς ἐπαίρεται καὶ ἀποστάσεις καὶ φυγάδια γίνονται ἐν αὐτῇ

²¹ καὶ νῦν θέτε <mark>γνώμην</mark> καταργῆσαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐκείνους καὶ ἡ πόλις ἐκείνη οὐκ οἰκοδομηθήσεται ἔτι ὅπως ἀπὸ τῆς <mark>γνώμης</mark>

Ezr 5:3 ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ καιρῷ ἦλθεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς Θανθαναι ἔπαρχος πέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ Σαθαρβουζανα καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖα εἶπαν αὐτοῖς τίς ἔθηκεν ὑμῖν <mark>γνώμην</mark> τοῦ οἰκοδομῆσαι τὸν οἶκον τοῦτον καὶ τὴν χορηγίαν ταύτην καταρτίσασθαι
⁵ καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν Ιουδα καὶ οὐ κατήργησαν αὐτούς ἕως <mark>γνώμη</mark> τῷ Δαρείῳ ἀπηνέχθη καὶ τότε ἀπεστάλη τῷ φορολόγῳ ὑπὲρ τούτου

⁹ τότε ἠρωτήσαμεν τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἐκείνους καὶ οὕτως εἴπαμεν αὐτοῖς τίς ἔθηκεν ὑμῖν <mark>γνώμην</mark> τὸν οἶκον τοῦτον οἰκοδομῆσαι καὶ τὴν χορηγίαν ταύτην καταρτίσασθαι
¹³ αλλ᾽ ἐν ἔτει πρώτῳ Κύρου τοῦ βασιλέως Κῦρος ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔθετο <mark>γνώμην</mark> τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦτον

1Es 6:22 if it is found that the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem was done with the **consent** of King Cyrus, and if it is approved by our lord the king, let him send us directions concerning these things."

1Es 7:4-5 So with the **consent** of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of the Persians, the holy house was finished by the twenty-third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of King Darius.

Ezr 4:19 So I made a **decree**, and someone searched and discovered that this city has risen against kings from long ago, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it.

²¹ Therefore issue an **order** that these people be made to cease, and that this city not be rebuilt, until I make a decree.

Ezr 5:3 At the same time Tattenai the governor of the province Beyond the River and Shethar-bozenai and their associates came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who gave you a **decree** to build this house and to finish this structure?"

⁵ But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them until a **report** reached Darius and then answer was returned by letter in reply to it.

⁹ Then we spoke to those elders and asked them, 'Who gave you a **decree** to build this house and to finish this structure?'

¹³ However, King Cyrus of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, made a **decree** that this house of God should be rebuilt.

οἰκοδομηθῆναι
¹⁷ καὶ νῦν εἰ ἐπὶ τὸν βασιλέα ἀγαθόν ἐπισκεπήτω ἐν οἴκῳ τῆς γάζης τοῦ βασιλέως Βαβυλῶνος ὅπως γνῷς ὅτι ἀπὸ βασιλέως Κύρου ἐτέθη **γνώμη** οἰκοδομῆσαι τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἐν Ιερουσαλημ καὶ γνοὺς ὁ βασιλεὺς περὶ τούτου πεμψάτω πρὸς ἡμᾶς

Ezr 6:1 τότε Δαρεῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔθηκεν **γνώμην** καὶ ἐπεσκέψατο ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις ὅπου ἡ γάζα κεῖται ἐν Βαβυλῶνι
³ ἐν ἔτει πρώτῳ Κύρου βασιλέως Κῦρος ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔθηκεν **γνώμην** περὶ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐν Ιερουσαλὴμ οἶκος οἰκοδομηθήτω καὶ τόπος οὗ θυσιάζουσιν τὰ θυσιάσματα καὶ ἔθηκεν ἔπαρμα ὕψος πήχεις ἑξήκοντα πλάτος αὐτοῦ πήχεων ἑξήκοντα
⁸ καὶ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἐτέθη **γνώμη** μήποτέ τι ποιήσητε μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν Ιουδαίων τοῦ οἰκοδομῆσαι οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκεῖνον καὶ ἀπὸ ὑπαρχόντων βασιλέως τῶν φόρων πέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐπιμελῶς δαπάνη ἔστω διδομένη τοῖς ανδράσιν ἐκείνοις τὸ μὴ καταργηθῆναι

¹¹ καὶ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἐτέθη **γνώμη** ὅτι πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἀλλάξει τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καθαιρεθήσεται ξύλον ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ καὶ ὠρθωμένος παγήσεται ἐπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτοῦ τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ ποιηθήσεται
¹² καὶ ὁ θεός οὗ κατασκηνοῖ τὸ ὄνομα ἐκεῖ καταστρέψει πάντα βασιλέα καὶ λαόν ὃς ἐκτενεῖ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἀλλάξαι ἢ ἀφανίσαι τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἐν Ιερουσαλημ ἐγὼ Δαρεῖος ἔθηκα **γνώμην** ἐπιμελῶς ἔσται
¹⁴ καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν Ιουδαίων ᾠκοδομοῦσαν καὶ οἱ Λευῖται ἐν προφητείᾳ Αγγαιου τοῦ προφήτου καὶ Ζαχαριου υἱοῦ Αδδω καὶ ἀνῳκοδόμησαν καὶ κατηρτίσαντο ἀπὸ **γνώμης** θεοῦ Ισραηλ καὶ ἀπὸ **γνώμης** Κύρου καὶ Δαρειου καὶ Αρθασασθα

¹⁷ And now, if it seems good to the king, have a search made in the royal archives there in Babylon, to see whether a **decree** was issued by King Cyrus for the rebuilding of this house of God in Jerusalem. Let the king send us his pleasure in this matter."

Ezr 6:1 Then King Darius made a **decree**, and they searched the archives where the documents were stored in Babylon.

³ In the first year of his reign, King Cyrus issued a **decree**: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices are offered and burnt offerings are brought; its height shall be sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits,
⁸ Moreover I make a **decree** regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God: the cost is to be paid to these people, in full and without delay, from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province Beyond the River.

¹¹ Furthermore I **decree** that if anyone alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of the house of the perpetrator, who then shall be impaled on it. The house shall be made a dunghill.

¹² May the God who has established his name there overthrow any king or people that shall put forth a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, make a **decree**; let it be done with all diligence."
¹⁴ So the elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of the prophet Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. They finished their building by **command** of the God of Israel and by **decree** of Cyrus, Darius, and King Artaxerxes of

βασιλέων Περσῶν

Ezr 7:13 ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἐτέθη <mark>γνώμη</mark> ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ἑκουσιαζόμενος ἐν βασιλείᾳ μου ἀπὸ λαοῦ Ισραηλ καὶ ἱερέων καὶ Λευιτῶν πορευθῆναι εἰς Ιερουσαλημ μετὰ σοῦ πορευθῆναι

²¹ καὶ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἐγὼ Αρθασασθα βασιλεύς ἔθηκα <mark>γνώμην</mark> πάσαις ταῖς γάζαις ταῖς ἐν πέρα τοῦ ποταμοῦ ὅτι πᾶν ὁ ἂν αἰτήσῃ ὑμᾶς Εσδρας ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ γραμματεὺς τοῦ νόμου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἑτοίμως γιγνέσθω
²³ πᾶν ὁ ἐστιν ἐν <mark>γνώμη</mark> θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ γιγνέσθω προσέχετε μή τις ἐπιχειρήσῃ εἰς οἶκον θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μήποτε γένηται ὀργὴ ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν υἱῶν αυτοῦ

2Ma 4:39 γενομένων δὲ πολλῶν ἱεροσυλημάτων κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ὑπὸ τοῦ Λυσιμάξου μετὰ τῆς τοῦ Μενελάου <mark>γνώμης</mark> καὶ διαδοθείσης ἔξω τῆς φήμης ἐπισυνήχθη τὸ πλῆθος ἐπὶ τὸν Λυσίμαχον χρυσωμάτων ἤδη πολλῶν διενηνεγμένων
2Ma 9:20 εἰ ἔρρωσθε καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὰ ἴδια κατὰ <mark>γνώμην</mark> ἐστὶν ὑμῖν εἰς οὐρανὸν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχων
2Ma 11:37 διὸ σπεύσατε καὶ πέμψατέ τινας ὅπως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐπιγνῶμεν ὁποίας ἐστὲ <mark>γνώμης</mark>
2Ma 14:20 πλείονος δὲ γενομένης περὶ τούτων ἐπισκέψεως καὶ τοῦ ἡγουμένου τοῖς πλήθεσιν ἀνακοινωσαμένου καὶ φανείσης ὁμοψήφου <mark>γνώμης</mark> ἐπένευσαν ταῖς συνθήκαις
4Ma 9:27 ὡς δ' εἰ φαγεῖν βούλοιτο πρὶν βασανίζεσθαι πυνθανόμενοι τὴν εὐγενῆ <mark>γνώμην</mark> ἤκουσαν
Psa 82:4 ἐπὶ τὸν λαόν σου κατεπανουργεύσαντο <mark>γνώμην</mark> καὶ ἐβουλεύσαντο κατὰ τῶν ἁγίων σου
Pro 2:16 τοῦ μακράν σε ποιῆσαι ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ εὐθείας καὶ ἀλλότριον τῆς δικαίας <mark>γνώμης</mark>

Persia;

Ezr 7:13 I **decree** that any of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom who freely offers to go to Jerusalem may go with you.

²¹ "I, King Artaxerxes, **decree** to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River: Whatever the priest Ezra, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, let it be done with all diligence,

²³ Whatever is **commanded** by the God of heaven, let it be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, or wrath will come upon the realm of the king and his heirs.
2Ma 4:39 When many acts of sacrilege had been committed in the city by Lysimachus with the **connivance** of Menelaus, and when report of them had spread abroad, the populace gathered against Lysimachus, because many of the gold vessels had already been stolen.

2Ma 9:20 If you and your children are well and your affairs are as you **wish**, I am glad. As my hope is in heaven,
2Ma 11:37 Therefore make haste and send messengers so that we may have your **judgment**.
2Ma 14:20 When the terms had been fully considered, and the leader had informed the people, and it had appeared that they were of one mind, they **agreed** to the covenant.
4Ma 9:27 Before torturing him, they inquired if he were willing to eat, and they heard his noble **decision**.
Psa 83:3 They lay crafty **plans** against your people; they consult together against those you protect.
Pro 2:16 You will be saved from the loose woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words [Note: the LXX translates

this verse, "to take you far from the straight way and make you a stranger to righteous **advice**"]

Pro 12:26 ἐπιγνώμων δίκαιος ἑαυτοῦ φίλος ἔσται αἱ δὲ <mark>γνῶμαι</mark> τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνεπιεικεῖς ἁμαρτάνοντας καταδιώξεται κακά ἡ δὲ ὁδὸς τῶν ἀσεβῶν πλανήσει αὐτούς

Pro 12:26 The righteous gives good advice to friends, but the **way** of the wicked leads astray.

Wis 7:15 ἐμοὶ δὲ δῴη ὁ θεὸς εἰπεῖν κατὰ <mark>γνώμην</mark> καὶ ἐνθυμηθῆναι ἀξίως τῶν δεδομένων ὅτι αὐτὸς καὶ τῆς σοφίας ὁδηγός ἐστιν καὶ τῶν σοφῶν διορθωτής

Wis 7:15 May God grant me to speak with **judgment**, and to have thoughts worthy of what I have received; for he is the guide even of wisdom and the corrector of the wise.

Sir 6:23 ἄκουσον τέκνον καὶ ἔκδεξαι <mark>γνώμην</mark> μου καὶ μὴ ἀπαναίνου τὴν συμβουλίαν μου

Sir 6:23 Listen, my child, and accept my **judgment**; do not reject my counsel.

Dan 2:14 τότε Δανιηλ εἶπε βουλὴν καὶ <mark>γνώμην</mark> ἣν εἶχεν Αριώχῃ τῷ ἀρχιμαγείρῳ τοῦ βασιλέως ᾧ προσέταξεν ἐξαγαγεῖν τοὺς σοφιστὰς τῆς Βαβυλωνίας

Dan 2:14 Then Daniel responded with prudence and **discretion** to Arioch, the king's chief executioner, who had gone out to execute the wise men of Babylon;

Dan 6:5 ὅτε δὲ ἐβουλεύσατο ὁ βασιλεὺς καταστῆσαι τὸν Δανιηλ ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ τότε βουλὴν καὶ <mark>γνώμην</mark> ἐβουλεύσαντο ἐν ἑαυτοῖς οἱ δύο νεανίσκοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους λέγοντες ἐπεὶ οὐδεμίαν ἁμαρτίαν οὐδὲ ἄγνοιαν ηὕρισκον κατὰ τοῦ Δανιηλ περὶ ἧς κατηγορήσουσιν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα

Dan 6:4 So the presidents and the satraps tried [add: "prudently and **discreetly**"] to find grounds for complaint against Daniel in connection with the kingdom. But they could find no grounds for complaint or any corruption, because he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption could be found in him.

Dat 2:14 τότε Δανιηλ ἀπεκρίθη βουλὴν καὶ <mark>γνώμην</mark> τῷ Αριωχ τῷ ἀρχιμαγείρῳ τοῦ βασιλέως ὃς ἐξῆλθεν ἀναιρεῖν τοὺς σοφοὺς Βαβυλῶνος ¹⁵ ἄρξων τοῦ βασιλέως περὶ τίνος ἐξῆλθεν ἡ <mark>γνώμη</mark> ἡ ἀναιδὴς ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ βασιλέως ἐγνώρισεν δὲ τὸ ῥῆμα Αριωχ τῷ Δανιηλ

[**Dat** refers to the second century AD revision of Daniel LXX by Theodotion. The use of γνώμην in Dat 2:14 is like that in Dan 2:14, above; its use in Dat 2:15 could be rendered "[severe] **decree** [of the king].]

Act 20:3 ποιήσας τε μῆνας τρεῖς γενομένης ἐπιβουλῆς αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων μέλλοντι ἀνάγεσθαι εἰς τὴν

Act 20:3 where he stayed for three months. He was about to set sail for Syria when a plot was made against him by the Jews, and

Συρίαν ἐγένετο **γνώμης** τοῦ ὑποστρέφειν διὰ Μακεδονίας

1Co 1:10 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ᾖ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῒ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ **γνώμῃ**

1Co 7:25 Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω **γνώμην** δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἠλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι

⁴⁰ μακαριωτέρα δὲ ἐστιν ἐὰν οὕτως μείνῃ, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν **γνώμην** δοκῶ δὲ καγὼ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν

2Co 8:10 καὶ **γνώμην** ἐν τούτῳ δίδωμι· τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν συμφέρει οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τὸ ποιῆσαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ θέλειν προενήρξασθε ἀπὸ πέρυσι·

Phm 1:14 χωρὶς δὲ τῆς σῆς **γνώμης** οὐδὲν ἠθέλησα ποιῆσαι, ἵνα μὴ ὡς κατὰ ἀνάγκην τὸ ἀγαθόν σου ᾖ ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἑκούσιον

Rev 17:13 οὗτοι μίαν **γνώμην** ἔχουσιν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ διδόασιν

¹⁷ ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν ποιῆσαι τὴν **γνώμην** αὐτοῦ καὶ ποιῆσαι μίαν **γνώμην** καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ ἄχρι τελεσθήσονται οἱ λόγοι τοῦ θεοῦ

---

so he **decided** to return through Macedonia.

1Co 1:10 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same **purpose**.

1Co 7:25 Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my **opinion** as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

⁴⁰ But in my **judgment** she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

2Co 8:10 And in this matter I am giving my **advice**: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something—

Phm 1:14 but I preferred to do nothing without your **consent**, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced.

Rev 17:13 These are united [literally: "have one **opinion**"] in yielding their power and authority to the beast;

¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his **purpose** by **agreeing** [literally: "make one **purpose**"] to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.