

# THE WORD "ELECT" SHOULD NOT BE IN THE BIBLE

by Jacques More

The books of the New Testament (NT) were all written in the common Greek used throughout the Roman Empire: Koiné Greek as it is known from the word for "common" *Koiné*. This language remained in extensive use for several centuries. It is still of note during the Nicea Church Council in 325AD. After that, Latin became the main language. But Latin, at the time of Jesus, was the new language on the block. It was the official language of Roman administrators, and so, made it on the cross inscription **"Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin."** (John 19:19-20).

Not just due to a change of common language, but also due to different use over time, words found in the New Testament like *Presbuteros* (elder-presbyter) and *Episkopos* (bishop-episcopate-overseer), which are clearly inter-changeable for Paul (cp. Titus 1:5 & 1:7), then became used for separate roles. So that, as Paul advocated **"elders in every city"** (Titus 1:5), we know that, in the beginning, no single bishop existed over an area. A team leadership existed in every city: and one church per city.

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Clement who was one of the first senior bishops of Rome, when writing a letter on behalf of the Rome leadership to the Church at Corinth, he did so in the common Greek. This letter makes use of the word *eklektos* just like the New Testament and also just like the Old Testament (OT) bible which the first Christians used: the Septuagint (LXX – Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture: 1<sup>st</sup> language of the OT). I will look at Clement's use of the word *eklektos*.

**It is of note:** Clement wrote his letter, not on his own authority, but that of the team for whom he spoke and indeed for the whole church at Rome, as can be seen from his use of the plural pronouns "we" and "us", at the beginning, **"By reason of the sudden and repeated calamities and reverses which are befalling us, brethren, we consider that we have been somewhat tardy in giving heed to the matters of dispute that have arisen among you, dearly beloved"** (1 Clement 1:1 - C), at the end, **"For ye will give us great joy and gladness, if ye render obedience unto the things written by us through the Holy Spirit, and root out the unrighteous anger of your jealousy, according to the entreaty which we have made for peace and concord in this letter"** (C63:2): And, at the middle, in saying new leaders should be appointed by Corinth in the following manner, it testifies well that this is the process already in place at Rome too **"with the consent of the whole Church"** (C44:2). This was not a letter with authority over another, but a letter of support and entreaty from brothers to brothers.

Clement quotes a portion of Samuel – here, translated from the Hebrew into the English bibles: **"With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd."** (2 Samuel 22:26-27 - LXX 2 Kings).

The portion of Scripture Clement quotes is word for word identical to the LXX **"και μετα εκλεκτου εκλεκτος εση και μετα στρεβλου"** (C46:3 element). This has been translated directly (note the word "elect" assumed by the later translator) as **". . . and with the elect thou shalt be elect, and with the crooked . . ."**

So, the word "pure" in the Hebrew Scripture **"with the pure You will show Yourself pure"** was translated by the Greek translators of the LXX in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC by the word *eklektos*. Quality is the emphasis here for this Greek word. We can see this is also Clement's reading and use for the Greek word *eklektos* because of the progression of thought readable in his letter. **"But they that endured patiently in confidence inherited glory and honor; they were exalted, and had their names recorded by God in their memorial for ever and ever. Amen. (C45:8) To such examples as these therefore, brethren, we also ought to cleave. (C46:1) For it is written; Cleave unto the saints, for they that cleave unto them shall be sanctified. (C46:2) And again He saith in another place; With the guiltless man thou shalt be guiltless, and with the elect thou shalt be elect, and with the crooked thou shalt deal crookedly. (C46:3)".**

Clement shares in 45:8 about saints who **"endured patiently"**. In 46:1 he mentions these guys are an example to stick to. In 46:2 he says that to those who stick to this example for themselves, there is a reward of sanctification. Then in 46:3 he quotes the Scripture to prove his point that those who act as saints are treated as saints by God and, conversely, those who do wickedly are treated as

sinner. So, Clement's use of this passage is to emphasise quality: righteous living in contrast to wickedness. The flow of meaning involves being good, as per the preceding example and, in doing so, there is a corresponding reward from God. There is no implication of a selection involved: "elect" in its "selected or chosen by God" meaning, is excluded from the flow of thought portrayed to us by Clement in the letter. Clement then seals off the quality emphasis with **"Let us therefore cleave to the guiltless and righteous: and these are the *eklektos* of God."** (C46:4). Following in his flow about quality, here Clement is explicit in describing the *eklektos*: it is all those who equally exemplify the guiltless and righteous: no inference of a decision of God in the process, but only of the individual living righteously.

### The Septuagint (LXX)

We saw above that *eklektos* is translating "pure" and, we then saw this quality emphasis is the understood use of Clement for that word in his letter at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Now, is this word *eklektos* like "table" or "chair" with more than one meaning? Here is an example of two meanings for each of those English words: "The *Chair* of the committee sat on a wooden *chair* and, on the *table* in front of him was a book which contained on the first page a *table* of contents." An example in the Greek is the word *genea* which can mean either of two different things. This following quote is the only place where both meanings for *genea* occur in the same passage in the LXX: This is the English translation (from the Hebrew) **"these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation [LXX: *genean*], every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants [LXX: *genean*]"** (Esther 9:28). The word *genea* can mean either "generation" or "posterity/descendant/related group/nation" (see chapter 6 and Appendix 2 of *Serious Mistranslations of the bible - Serious*).

Is *eklektos* to be considered with two meanings? No. There is an un-disputed use of the word *eklektos* in the LXX to translate quality 52 times. The range of examples is extensive: from "highest branches" to "young men" (often – i.e. "guys in their prime"); "pleasant land" to "fatted fowl"; "rich apparel" to "choice silver"; "pure" to "precious stones": the word of choice for translating all these words in the Hebrew Scripture, all persistently and categorically emphasising quality is *eklektos* in the LXX. This is part of the total 82 occasions the word is found in the LXX. In my analysis, what at first appears questionable of the 30 remaining is then reasonably understood to also stand for quality (see Appendix 1 of *Serious*). And certainly, unlike *genea*, there are no clear indication the 30 should represent some other concept.

### "elect" in the New Testament

The word *eklektos* is translated 23 times in the NT either as "chosen" or "elect". Since Jesus and the apostles quote the LXX in the NT and *eklektos* only meant quality there, when we read Jesus saying **"Many are called, but few *eklektos*"** (Matthew 20:16; 22:14), it is reasonable thereby to see why I translate this as, **"many are called, but few have mettle."** And, just as this translation tallies with Jesus' reading in the LXX, so with every other place where *eklektos* is found in the NT an appropriate substitute word is needed. And, since there is no other Greek word from which "elect" is translated in the NT, then it follows, the word "elect" should not be in the NT.

For further examples of alternate words see chapter 4 of *Serious Mistranslations of the bible*.

### "elect" in the Old Testament

The word *eklektos* is found in the LXX for every place where the Hebrew was translated as "elect" (4) in the OT. All of these are translated from the Hebrew word *bachir*. In every place *bachir* is found the LXX translates it by using *eklektos*. Until the 4th century when Jerome translated the OT Hebrew into Latin, the predominant OT reading was by use of the LXX: the word *bachir* was not in view, only *eklektos*: quality was persistently read, just like Clement. So, In view of the overwhelming use of *eklektos* to represent quality, it is unreasonable not to consider that *bachir* has been misunderstood to mean "chosen" (8) or "choose" (1) - see Appendix 1 of *Serious*. With a fresh look at these places, in the light of all the above evidence, it is not difficult to picture quality fitting in. It is reasonable thereby to consider that: The word "elect" should not be in the bible [= the 9 words of the title above]

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