

SPECIAL LUCAN WORDS

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ALL scholars and Bible students are agreed, from the abundant evidence which we possess, that the same author wrote the Gospel which bears the name of St. Luke and the Book of Acts. His name is not given in the Scripture, but he is generally believed to have been St. Luke, and we shall accept this view. Our author was evidently well acquainted with the LXX translation of the Old Testament, as he uses many Greek words found in it which are not very generally employed elsewhere.

His style, unlike that of other writers of the New Testament, is classical, and it is said greatly to resemble that of Thucydides. Like the classical authors, but unlike the three other Evangelists, he makes use of a very large vocabulary, and he employs many compound Greek words in order to give forceful and descriptive meanings. From a recent examination of Wigram's Concordance of the Greek Text, from which our Authorized Version is translated, it is found that the number of different words used in the Gospel of St. Luke, but not employed elsewhere in the New Testament, is 261; the number used only in the Acts is 410; and common to both Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts, but not found elsewhere, is 64; making a total of no less than 735 words used by St. Luke which are not employed by any other writer in the New Testament.

Large as these numbers are, they do not represent all the words which are special to St. Luke, because the oldest MSS. of the New Testament give several additional ones, which he alone employed; these have been altered by copyists to more usual Greek equivalents, or to words in accord with those used by the other Synoptists in their parallel passages. Some examples are given in Table I., in which

the original special Lucan words have been replaced by others bearing nearly the same meaning. Happily hardly any practical difference has been made in any of the passages in which they occur, except in one case; and even in that one the general meaning conveyed has scarcely been affected.

TABLE I.

SPECIAL LUCAN WORDS IN THE OLDEST MSS.				
Ref. Nos.	Special Lucan Greek words in the oldest MSS.	Replaced by more usual words in the more recent Greek MSS. from which our A.V. is translated	Corresponding English words in the A.V. and in the R.V.	Texts
1	<i>belonē</i>	<i>raphis</i>	A needle (A.V. and R.V.)	Luke xviii. 25
2	<i>klinarion</i>	<i>klinē</i>	A bed (A.V. and R.V.)	Acts v. 15
3	<i>dienthumeomai</i>	<i>enthumeomai</i>	To think (A.V. and R.V.)	Acts x. 19
4	<i>sunepitithēmē</i>	<i>suntithēmi</i>	{ To assent (A.V.) { To join in the charge (R.V.)	Acts xxiv. 9
5	<i>katadikē</i>	<i>dikē</i>	{ Judgment (A.V.) { Sentence (R.V.)	Acts xxv. 13
6	<i>ekpēdaō</i>	<i>eispēdaō</i>	{ To run in (A.V.) { To spring forth (R.V.)	Acts xiv. 14

These are, most of them, natural alterations to make. In No. 1 in Table I. the word has evidently been changed in order to obtain agreement with the parallel passages in Matt. xix. 24 and Mark x. 25, in both of which *raphis*, an ordinary needle, is employed. The fact that Luke was a physician (Col. iv. 14), who often used medical terms, doubtless explains why he had himself employed *belonē*, which means a surgical needle, as Dr. Hobart has pointed out. The word *belos*, a dart, occurs once in the New Testament (Eph. vi. 16). Apparently it bears the same relationship to *belonē* as does our English word *lance* to *lancet*.

It would appear that the copyist altered the original words in Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, because they were unfamiliar ones, or perhaps out of date; none of them occur in any other passage in the New Testament. On the other hand, all the words which replace them appear in other Gospels

or in the Epistles. The substituted words are less definite or less forceful than the originals, but our R.V. translators have not attempted to make much practical difference in the rendering of any of them.

Number 6 is of interest, the substituted word *eispēdaō*, to run or spring in, is itself a special Lucan one, because it only occurs twice in the Greek text from which our Authorized Version was translated, in Acts xvi. 29 and in the passage under consideration. In the former it is the same in the oldest MSS., but in Acts xiv. 14 the original word is *ekpēdaō*, which signifies to spring forth,—a very different meaning from the other. This is faithfully brought out in the Revised Version.

The original Greek MSS. were written in capitals. Probably the two parts of the second Greek letter K (*kappa*) of the original word, written in a running hand, were a little separated from each other, and when the passage was copied each part was taken for a separate letter, *iota* and *sigma* respectively; the capital letter *sigma* being formed like our C; thus *EK* became *EIC*. The right-hand part of the original *kappa* ought of course to have contained an angle, but it is easily seen that it might have been hurriedly written as a continuous curve.

Although the word itself is quite changed, yet happily very little difference is made in the general meaning of the sentence to which it belongs. Whichever word is used, the action of Paul and Barnabas strongly deprecated the proffered worship of the heathen at Lystra.

It is by no means unlikely that the original texts of the Gospel and of the Acts may have contained a still greater number of special words, as it is quite possible that the replacement of unusual ones may have begun before the oldest MSS. which we now possess were copied out. There is no reason, however, to fear that any changes of practical importance have been made.

The force of the special Lucan words is not always uniformly rendered in our two translations of the Scriptures.

TABLE II. TRANSLATION OF SPECIAL LUCAN WORDS

Ref. Nos.	Special Lucan Greek Words	Corresponding English Words		Texts	Remarks
		In A. V.	In R. V.		
1	{ <i>diischurizomai</i> <i>thumomacheō</i>	{ To confidently affirm To constantly affirm To be highly displeased	To confidently affirm To confidently affirm To be highly displeased	Luke xxii. 59 Acts xi. 15 Acts xii. 20	} Emphasis given in both versions } As a rule the R. V. gives emphasis more fully than does the A. V.
2	{ <i>diatarassō</i> <i>exalothreuomai</i>	To be troubled To be destroyed	To be greatly troubled To be utterly destroyed	Luke i. 29 Acts iii. 23	
3	<i>epathroisomai</i>	To gather thick together	To gather together	Luke xi. 29	} It is seldom that the A. V. gives emphasis when the R. V. does not do so } <i>Aporeō</i> , translated to doubt, or to be perplexed, occurs in Acts xxv. 20; 2 Cor. iv. 8, etc. The compound word must have a fuller meaning
4	<i>diaporeō</i>	{ To be perplexed To be much perplexed	To be much perplexed To be perplexed	Luke ix. 7 Luke xxiv. 4	
5	<i>anasēteō</i>	To seek	To seek	{ Luke ii. 44 Acts xi. 25	} <i>Zēteō</i> , translated to seek, occurs frequently (Matt. ii. 18; Luke ix. 9, etc.). The compound word must have a fuller meaning

In Table II. a very few examples are given.

1. Those which are represented as emphatic in both the A. V. and R. V.
2. Those represented as emphatic in the R. V. but not in the A. V.
3. One represented as emphatic in the A. V. but not in the R. V.
4. Those in which emphasis is irregularly given in both Versions.
5. Those in which emphasis is lost in both Versions.

Though the R. V. generally translates the Greek of the New Testament more faithfully than does the A. V. in giving the correct emphasis, as in No. 1 in Table II., yet, nevertheless, it will be noticed that in No. 5 the full meaning to an expressive compound Greek word has not been given in either of our Versions. In No. 4 we notice a want of uniformity in both Versions, the same Greek word being represented with emphasis in one passage and without it in another.

Translation work is, of course, always beset with difficulties, as is evident from Table II., in which it is manifest that our English Versions do not always give the full force of the original Greek; but this can hardly be wondered at, for if every shade of meaning conveyed by the expressive words of the Greek vocabulary were represented in English, the sentences would be unduly lengthened and encumbered with a multitude of words. Clearness and directness of expression would then be lost.

St. Luke has taken full advantage of the great richness of expression which can be given by the Greek language to tell his marvelous stories of the life and atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the spreading of the glorious gospel far and wide among the nations of the earth.