

The Ministry of Mending
“Bear” Greek (“bastadzo”)
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Introduction: At the start of each lesson we want to remind you of the ministry of “comfort.” The English word “comfort” is the “anchor word” we are using in our series. Our English word “comfort” comes from two Latin words, “cum” in Latin meaning “with” and “fortis” in Latin meaning “fortification, fortress, or fortify.” One commentator stated the English word “comfort” literally means a “strengthened-wither” or more understandably “someone who is with you giving strength.”¹

We are going to explore other words that though not translated “comfort,” can give “comfort” by their very nature, meaning and usage.

1. Word Usage in Language/Translations

What can we understand about the word we are studying today?

A. Forms used (Greek)

This word “bastadzo” (pronounced “bas-tad-zo”) means “to lift, raise, bear, or carry.”²

B. Times used

This word “bastadzo” is used 27 times in the New Testament.³

C. Ways used (translated)

This word is translated into English at least three main ways:

“bastadzo” translated “bear” used 23xs, Matt. 3:11; 8:17; 20:12; Mk. 14:13; Lk. 7:14; 11:27; 14:27; 22:10; Jn. 12:6; 16:12; 19:17; 20:15; Acts 9:15; 15:10; 21:35; Rom. 11:18; 15:1; Gal. 5:10; 6:2,5,17; Rev. 2:2,3.

“bastadzo” translated “carry” used 3xs, Lk. 10:4; Acts 3:2; Rev. 17:7

“bastadzo” translated “take up” used 1xs, Jn. 10:31⁴

2. Word Usage in History

How is the word we are studying used historically?

A. Classic writing

In classical Greek literature, I found no references to this word, which doesn’t mean they don’t exist.⁵

B. Septuagint writing

In the Septuagint (LXX, 250bc-150bc, Greek translation of the Old Testament) I found no references to this word which doesn’t mean they don’t exist.⁶

C. Rabbinical writing

In Rabbinical writing, I have no references to this word, which doesn’t mean they don’t exist.⁷

D. Pre-New Testament writing

The usage of this word prior to the New Testament times, I found no references, which doesn’t mean they don’t exist.⁸

E. During New Testament writing

The usage of this word during the New Testament times (45ad-100ad) outside of the Bible, the word meant, “to carry, raise, lift.” It was also used metaphorically (1.) “to ennoble or exalt,” (2.) “to be popular,” and (3.) “to bear in mind.”⁹

F. After New Testament

The usage of this word after New Testament times was (1.) “to take up any burden,” (2.) “carry a burden,” and (3.) “to remove a burden.”¹⁰ In 117ad, the word was also used “figuratively” in the sense of enduring.”¹¹ In 131ad and 190ad, the word was used also as a cultural term to describe a bank “heist” or in other words “lift or take away” the money.¹²

3. Word Usage in the New Testament

How is the word we are studying used in the New Testament?

A. Matt. 3:11; Mk. 14:13; Lk. 7:14; 10:4; 11:27; 14:27; 22:10; Jn. 12:6; 19:17; 20:15; Acts 3:2; 9:15; 15:10; 21:35; Gal. 5:10; 6:5,17; Rev. 2:2; 17:7

The standard usage of “lift, carry, bear, raise” is used in these passages.

B. Matthew 8:17

Matthew tells us, Jesus “took (Gr. “elaben”) on Himself our infirmities and bare (Gr. “bastadzo”) our sickness” which is a quote from Isaiah 53:4. There are two major views on this passage: (1.) the “faith cure” which embraces both spiritual and physical healing (charismatic/Pentecostal). This means that Jesus’ death on the cross physically healed people. However, this means that when people are healed by Jesus, He himself would become afflicted with their sickness;¹³ or (2.) “substitutionary atonement for sin”¹⁴ Many conservative commentators refer the “infirmities and sicknesses” to “guilt and curse” of sin from Galatians 3:13, however, there is physical salvation involved with resurrection and glorification, 1 Corinthians 15:26.¹⁵ Many commentators see the “griefs” in Isaiah and “infirmities” in Matthew as referring to the “guilt;” and the “sorrows” in Isaiah and “sicknesses” in Matthew as referring to the “pain, grief, or anguish of mind.”¹⁶ When Jesus “bare” our “sicknesses” He carried them away.

C. John 10:31

John stated, “Then the Jews ‘took up’ (Gr. ‘ebastasan’) stones again to stone Him.” Did they “lift up” stones or did they “fetch stones from a distance” or did they “carry” stones along the way waiting for a time to throw them at Jesus. Remember they wanted to “kill” Jesus.¹⁷ This is the third time the Jews tried to stone Jesus.¹⁸ Here we see that “bearing” stones, was a premeditated activity.

D. John 12:6

John reveals the following, “This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to ‘take’ (Gr. ‘bastazden’) what was put in it.” Judas “carried the money away” which meant he “stole” the money. Judas was “taking away” or “carrying off” the money.

E. Romans 11:18

Paul reminds us, “Do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not ‘support’ (Gr. ‘bastadzeis’) the root, but the root you.” Competition can be a dangerous thing. Pride likes to boast in the privilege of being over someone else. In this case it is the church over Israel. The “church” (the “you” in the singular) must learn that “God’s program” does not need the whole church’s support. God is supporting it.¹⁹

F. Romans 15:1

Paul tells us “We then who are strong ‘ought’ (Gr. ‘opheilo’ strong obligation’) to ‘bear’ (Gr. ‘bastadzein’) with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” “The strong are not to simply tolerate the weaknesses of their weaker brothers; they are to help the weak shoulder their burdens by showing loving and practical consideration for them.”²⁰

G. Galatians 6:2

Paul tells us to “Bear’ (Gr. ‘bastadzete’ present active imperative) one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” The “burdens” (Gr. “baros”) are “...the extra heavy loads, which represent difficulties or problems people have trouble dealing with. Bear denotes carrying something with endurance.”²¹

“This does not mean tolerate each other or put up with each other. It means jointly shouldering each member’s burdens. Everybody should put his shoulder under the burdens under which this or that individual member is groaning, whatever these burdens may be.”²²

4. How are we to understand this word?

This word we studied “bastadzo” literally means “to bear or carry” and has the following characteristics.

- used with someone who is hurting
- used with someone who is helpless
- used with someone who is carrying a heavy load
- used with someone who is burdened down and without strength
- used with someone who is weak
- involves helping to carry the load
- involves lifting or making the load lighter

The Christian is commanded to continually “bear” (Gr. “bastadzete” present active imperative) those who are “overtaken in a fault” (Gr. “prolemptheti”)(Galatians 6:2). Also, the Christian is “obligated” (Gr. “opheilo”) to do this “bearing of burdens” (Romans 15:1).

Perhaps a definition of “bastadzo” would be “helping to carry, lift, or remove the burden that is too heavy for a weak Christian to support.”

Conclusion: The church is to be a help center where Christians help other Christians that are struggling, but more often we are told the church is not a place to focus on the Christian’s personal problems. Pastors try to deal with the “me culture” and its “self-centeredness” but by doing so they tend to focus on he lost trying to divert attention from the needs of the saints. Both the lost and the hurting Christian are a part of Christian responsibility and service, but many churches focus on one or the other rather than both.

References:

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