

## **“Help” Greek “antechomai” (“antechiesthe” “antecho” “antechomai”)**

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1993 (Rev. 96,10)

**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.”<sup>1</sup>

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 be understood about the word we are studying today?

#### **A. Forms used (Greek)**

This word “antechomai” (pronounced “an-tech-o-mai”) comes from two Greek words “anti” meaning “for, over against” and “echo” meaning “to hold, to have.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **B. Times used**

This word “antechomai” is used 4 times in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup>

#### **C. Ways used (translated)**

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

“antechomai” translated “hold to” used 2xs, Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13

“antechomai” translated “support” used 1xs, 1 Thessalonians 5:14

“antechomai” translated “hold fast” used 1xs, Titus 1:9<sup>4</sup>

### **2. Word Usage in History**

How is the word we are studying used historically?

#### **A. Classic writing**

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

#### **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.<sup>6</sup>

#### **C. Rabbinical writing**

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

#### **D. Pre-New Testament writing**

The usage of this word prior to the New Testament times was “to hold firmly” and was related to life in many ways. It was used in the “protection of others,” “making sure someone’s claims are not lost,” and “maintaining rights.” However, the exact spelling and syntax do not occur as found in the New Testament.<sup>8</sup>

#### **E. During New Testament writing**

The usage of this word during the New Testament times (45ad-100ad) outside of the Bible, was “antikathemai” in the sense of “to watch each other” so as to insure safety.<sup>9</sup>

## **F. After New Testament**

The usage of this word after New Testament times was (1.) “to hold fast to something” and (2.) “to take an interest in, pay attention to, help someone.” The word was used as “antecho” and “antechomai.”<sup>10</sup>

### **3. Word Usage in the New Testament**

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

#### **A. Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13**

Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.” The words “be loyal to” translate the word “antechomai” which means “holding to” or “devoted to.” It is the idea of maintaining a face-to-face on-going relationship with honest and open devotion.<sup>11</sup> Jesus uses the “loyal” (Gr. “antechomai”) in the context of “service.”<sup>12</sup> To help someone and be loyal to them is a part of Christian service.

#### **B. 1 Thessalonians 5:14**

Paul commands that Christians continually “help” (Gr. “antechesthe” present active imperative) those who are “weak, helpless, distressed, or without strength” (Gr. “asthenon”).

“The verb for ‘help’ [‘antechesthe’] presents a graphic picture of the support which the weak needed. It is as if Paul wrote to the stronger Christians, ‘hold on to them,’ ‘cling to them,’ ‘even put you arm round them.’”<sup>13</sup>

“The word to ‘uphold’ (Gr. ‘antechomai’) the weak paints a beautiful picture. It comes from a word meaning ‘to hold before or against.’ It is the picture of a person keeping oneself face to face with someone, holding on to them. Instead of rejecting or belittling the weak, the Christian fellowship should be the place where a ‘buddy system’ can be developed for them. ...Some folks have a hard time staying afloat on the treacherous waters of life. With a ‘buddy’ they just might make it.”<sup>14</sup>

#### **C. Titus 1:9**

Here Titus uses the word in relationship to the “Word of God” that we should “hold fast” or “be devoted to” it.

### **4. How are we to understand this word?**

This word we studied “antechomai” literally means “to hold one’s self over against” and has the following characteristics.<sup>15</sup>

- used with someone who is hurting
- used with someone who is helpless
- used with someone who is distressed
- used with someone who is without strength
- used with someone who is weak
- involves Christian service
- involves loyalty
- involves devotion
- an activity of holding tightly to them
- an activity of supporting them
- an activity of clinging strongly to them

The Christian is commanded to continually “help” (Gr. “antechesthe” present active imperative) those who are “weak, helpless, distressed, or without strength” (Gr. “asthenon”).

Perhaps a definition of “antechomai” would be “clinging to, being devoted to, to hold one’s self over against someone who is hurting trying to sustain, help, and ease the distress.”

**Conclusion:** Some say if you are experiencing difficult times, you should not pray about it or react to it by asking for help, because it is the Lord's will for you to suffer and experience this situation. In other words they say "get over it" and "get used to it." This removes the responsibility of Christian service in the area of "helping the hurting" and removes intercessory or personal prayer. Paul makes it clear, helping those who are hurting is a command and a part of the ministry of the church. Intercessory prayer is a part of grace and God's high priesthood on the part of the Christian.

**References:**

- <sup>1</sup>The Love of Life, Donald Grey Barnhouse, Glendale: G/L publications, 1973, p. 187
- <sup>2</sup>The Analytical Greek Lexicon, Harold Moulton, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, p. 32
- <sup>3</sup>Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament, J.B. Smith, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1977, p. 27
- <sup>4</sup>Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament, J.B. Smith, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1977, p. 27
- <sup>5</sup>None found at this time
- <sup>6</sup>None found at this time
- <sup>7</sup>None found at this time
- <sup>8</sup>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, James Moulton and George Milligan, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930, p. 47
- <sup>9</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon, Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, Oxford: Clarendon, 1953, p. 156
- <sup>10</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979, p. 73
- <sup>11</sup>Commentary on Luke, Ray Summers, Waco: Word, 1972, p. 192
- <sup>12</sup>Matthew, H. N. Ridderbos, Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1987, p. 138; The Gospel According to Matthew, Alan Hugh McNeile, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980, p. 85
- <sup>13</sup>The Gospel & the End of Time, John Stott, Downers Grover: Intervarsity, 1991, p. 122
- <sup>14</sup>1,2 Thessalonians, Gary Demarest, The Communicator's Commentary, Waco: Word, 1984, Vo. 9, p. 94
- <sup>15</sup>1 & 2 Thessalonians, D. Edmond Hiebert, Chicago: Moody, 1992, p. 253