

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA.55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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WHAT DOES "*TORMENT*" MEAN?

In the previous study on future punishment (No. **SB182**) it was suggested that the word "**torment**" in Revelation 14:10 needs to be carefully examined in view of the context in which it is there found. If this word means what we usually take it to mean (to torture, to cause great physical pain), we then find ourselves in a quagmire of difficulties inasmuch as this "tormenting" is done "**in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.**" These words suggest a location far more like heaven than they do the traditional hell.

The Greek word in this passage which is translated "tormented" is **basanidzo**, which comes from **basanos**, and we are fortunate to have many sources of information concerning the historical use and development of these two words. If the reader will look up the word "basanite" in the dictionary, he will find it defined as being a certain kind of rock, and also as meaning "a touchstone."

This word came into our language from the Greek and through the Latin; in both it meant a touchstone, that is, a stone used to test the purity of gold or silver by the mark left on the stone when it was rubbed with the metal. We can surmise that this was a very important method of testing when none of our modern methods of assaying precious metals were available.

The ancient Greeks called this stone *basanos*, a word they derived from *basis*, which means the foot (Note this word in Acts 3:7). Thus, in their examinations or testings of precious metals they were trying to "get down to basics," or "get to the root of the matter," even as we speak today. We can imagine that in their dealings if the question arose, "Is it gold?" the answer would probably be, "Put it to the *basanos* (touchstone) and we will find out."

When we check the leading Classical Greek lexicon (Liddell-Scott), we find that **basanos** is defined as meaning "the touchstone, (Latin, lapis Lydius), a dark-colored stone on which pure gold, when rubbed, leaves a peculiar mark," then "the use of this

as a test," and "generally, a test, trial whether a thing be genuine, solid or real," then "inquiry or examination by torture."

We also find that in Classical Greek writings the word **basanidzij** was used to indicate the act of rubbing things upon the touchstone, to put to the test, to prove, to investigate scientifically; of persons, to examine closely, to cross question; then, to question by applying torture for the purpose of extracting a confession.

From this the word **basinestes** was developed to signify an examiner, a questioner, an investigator, and finally, due to the methods these men used, a torturer. See this word in Matt. 18:34 where it is evident that it means far more than a jailer.

Thus, from these facts we find that this word has a history of development. *Basanos* was first the name of a certain kind of stone, and this name came from the fact that this peculiar stone could be used for the testing of gold, so *basanos* came to mean a touchstone. Out of this noun came the verb *basanidzij* which described the action of rubbing with the *basanos*, and this grew to mean any act of testing, trying, or investigating.

The Greeks then developed **basanisteos** which meant to be proved or tested under suffering, and **basanisterion** which meant "the question chamber," also **basanistria** which meant an examiner. Thus some form or derivation of *basanos* was used when a Greek desired to indicate any kind of severe, diligent, or rigorous examination or trial of any kind. And since these examinations of those accused of crimes degenerated into nothing more than legal torture, *basanos* came to mean torment.

Definite light on this practice of "examination by torture" can be found in Acts 22:24 when the Roman chief-captain ordered Paul's arrest and declared he should "**be examined by scourging**," to find what crime he had committed. While the word *basanos* is not used here, this act could be described by the word *basanidzo*, or as it might be said in our vernacular, "to beat the truth out of him." This is what most preliminary examinations degenerated into, especially if the one charged were a slave or not a Roman citizen. Thus we see the process by which the word *basanos* which originally meant a touchstone, then to examine rigorously, came to mean to torment.

We find four forms of this word in the New Testament: **basanidzo**, **basanismos**, **basinistes**, and **basanos**. (Strong's words No. 928, 929, 930, 931. EGC page 103). We will examine these four words in the order of their appearance.

Matt. 4:24. *Basanidzo* is here translated "tormented." It is used to describe intense pain which some of these suffered.

Matt. 8:6. Here *basanidzo* is translated "tormented," and it is used by this centurion to describe the condition of his paralyzed slave, which was one of severe pain.

Matt. 8:29. Here *basanidzo* is also translated "torment." It is my studied opinion that the meaning of the question asked by these demons was: "Have you come here to put us on trial before the day of judgment?"

Matt. 14:24. *Basanidzo* is here translated "tossed." It has to do with the ship that was being put to the test by wind and waves. The question in the minds of the disciples was would it hold together under such testing.

Matt. 18:34. Here *basinestes* is translated "tormentors." These were officers in the administration of justice at this time. Most trials of those charged with crimes started with the operations of these examiners. Their task was to secure confessions and establish guilt in advance of actual court-room appearances. Many of these were notorious because of the cruelty used in obtaining these confessions. It is therefore little wonder that "to put on trial" came to mean "to torment."

Mark 5:7. Here *basanidzo* is translated "torment." This man asked a similar question to that asked by the two men in Matt. 8:29.

Mark 6:48. Here *basanidzo* is translated "toiling." It is evident that the truth being declared here is that these men were by wind and wave being put to the test as oarsmen.

Luke 8:28. This is the same Greek word and the same translation as Mark 5:7.

Luke 16:23 and 28. Two occurrences of *basanos* are found here, one singular and one plural, translated "torment" and "torments." See my pamphlet on "The Rich Man and Lazarus" for a full examination of this portion.

2 Peter 2:8. Here *basanos* is translated "vexed," and it is difficult to decide what meaning should be given to this word. It is clear that the filthy manner of life of the wicked men of Sodom severely tested the righteous soul of Lot, but it is also plain that he was tormented by what he saw and heard.

Rev. 9:5. In this passage "*basanismos*" is found twice, translated "torment" in both occurrences. This appears to be what is meant, but note that it has to do with men on earth, not men in hell.

Rev. 11: 10. Here *basanidzo* is translated "torment." It has to do with what the two prophets do to those "that dwell upon the earth." It is evident that these divine

spokesmen by this challenging testimony had put these men to the test and laid bare their characters.

Rev. 12:2. Here *basanidzij* is translated "pained." It has reference to a woman going through the ordeal of bringing forth a child.

Rev. 14:10, 11. We now come to the two occurrences of *basanidzij* which started our search, and the question now before us has to do with what meaning this word shall be given in this context. And whatever we may conclude that these two words mean in this passage, we must keep in mind the fact that this action takes place in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. In view of this I am forced to say that I cannot believe and I do not believe the concept set forth in the King James Version of this passage. However, since I have found that the word *basanidzo* has two meanings in the Word of God, I will choose the meaning that best suits the context here and say that this word in Rev. 14: 10 indicates a most rigorous and stringent examination that will bring out all the facts as to why these "beast worshippers" became involved in this great sin.

I fully believe that the events described in Rev. 6 to 14 are related to matters that immediately precede the actual second coming of Jesus Christ. However, before the Lord Jesus returns to be personally present for a thousand years, there must be a long period of divine government, followed by a revolt against this government. It is during this revolt that we have the appearance of that arch-deceiver, the personal antichrist.

We need to note carefully that those spoken of in Rev. 14:10 who are involved in this revolt are individuals who have lived under God's government, have seen its wonders, enjoyed its blessings, and partaken of the glorious outflowings of God which characterize that eon.

Of course, everyone then will *cry* out, even as many who read this will do now: "Why, why would anyone do this? How, how could anyone do this?" And we can rest assured that Jesus Christ will provide the answer when He makes a most rigorous examination of all who were involved in this great sin. Fully considered must be the ability *of* Satan to deceive, also the fact that he gave his deceptive powers to the beast, who in turn deceived them. The light that comes out of this examination will become a part of the established truths of God.

Since all judgment has been committed to the Son, this rigorous examination will be done in the presence of the Lord Jesus. The words "in fire and in brimstone" are metaphorical terms used to set forth the full, exacting nature of this test, even as we today speak of "the acid test" when no actual acid is involved.

The words "the smoke of their torment" are figurative for "the results of their trials" and these findings will "ascend in respect to the eons of the eons," that is, become a part of the fixed truths of God. Thus we see that our God is not such a "bad guy" after all.

Rev. 18:7, 10, 15 contain the word *basanismos*. All three are translated "torment."

Rev. 20: 10 will be dealt with at length in a future study.

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