

SEED & BREAD

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

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE *KAI* EXPLICATIVE PRINCIPLE

Please do not allow the title of this study to frighten you away from the reading of it. It explains a principle of interpretation that is of the utmost importance, and you will rejoice in the truth it reveals. And since I believe it is the duty of all who teach to take great and complex truths and set them forth in such manner that the average person can understand, I will explain this principle step by step in simple terms.

Ask anyone who has knowledge and they will tell you that the Greek word *kai* means *and*. However, if they should insist that it means *and* and never anything but *and* (as one who professed to have knowledge did) then you can rest assured that they do not know what they are talking about.

The reader might be pleasantly surprised if he looked up the word in *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* and found out how many things we can do and say with our word *and*. Its most common usages are to add something, or to connect words, clauses, and statements; such as: "I will need hammer and nails;" or, "John and George made the journey together, and this arrangement was beneficial to both." This is called the conjunctive use of the word *and*, and while it has many other uses, it is somewhat limited.

However, the Greeks could make use of their word *kai* in ways that we cannot use our word *and*. They could use it to annex a word, phrase, or sentence for the purpose of defining, explaining or interpreting that which has been said. In such usages, where the word *kai* is used to attach the explanation that follows, it is called the ***kai* explicative principle**. This is a principle of interpretation which needs to be recognized by all who study and interpret the New Testament.

The employment of *kai* in this manner by the Greeks was a most valuable grammatical form. They used it to emphasize identity between two things, and to establish apposition. Apposition is the placing of one noun beside another so that it explains and defines. The explicative *kai* was used to lock in the truth so that if it were misunderstood, it would have to be willful. This could well be one of the reasons why God selected the koine Greek to be the language used by the Spirit in inspiring the writers of the New Testament. The explicative *kai* was a favorite literary device of the Apostle Paul.

A pertinent example of the *kai* explicative principle can be seen in 1 Cor. 15:24 where the Greek reads “*to Theo kai Patria*”. This translated literally would say “the God and Father,” but if we render it this way in the context where it is found, it would make God to be one being and the Father another. The KJV translators did well here to translate this: **“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father,”** although I believe it would have been more explicit to say instead of *even*, “that is to say,” or “in other words.”

It will be well here to consider other passages where the word *kai* is translated “even” in the KJV, each one being an example of the *kai* explicative principle. .

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even (*kai*) the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 15:6.

Blessed be God, even (*kai*) the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. 2 Cor. 1:3.

To the end He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even (*kai*) our Father. 1 Thess. 3:13.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and (*kai*) God, even (*kai*) our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. 2 Thess 2:16.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even (*kai*) as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even (*kai*) denying the Lord that bought them. 2 Peter 2:1.

In some of the passages above the reader may note both the connective and the explicative use of the word *kai*, and in the last passage he will see what is called the expegetical use of this word. In this usage the word *kai* does not simply add an additional statement. It brings in an explanation of the previous statement that limits its application or clarifies its meaning. It can be clearly seen that the “damnable

heresy" is explained as "denying the Lord that bought them." If the translators had used *and* here instead of *even* it would cause us to think that "denying the Lord" was something in addition and not one of the damnable heresies.

It should be noted also that in 2 Thess. 2:16, while the translators recognized the explicative *kai* in its second occurrence they ignored it in the first. This should read: **"now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, even God, even the Father."**

The use of *kai* to add an explanation is a rule of Greek grammar which can be stated as follows: "When *kai*, the copulative 'and' connects two nouns of the same case, and if the definite article precedes the first noun and is absent from the second noun, the latter noun always refers to the same person, place or thing that has been set forth in the first noun." This rule is often referred to as Granville Sharp's law, being named after the man who discovered and set forth this principle. This is an established principle of Greek grammar which should not be ignored by any translator or interpreter. Nevertheless, I believe that apposition can be demonstrated in passages where both nouns have the article, also where neither have the article, the apposition being established by the explicative or exegetical use of the word *kai*. However, this is a matter of context and interpretation.

One of the most glorious things about the recognition of the *kai* explicative principle and the acceptance of Granville Sharp's law is the positive witness it gives to the Deity of Jesus Christ. We know that our God is an incomprehensible Being Who can be called either Father or Son, as both of these characteristics are inherent in Him. The Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. All that has ever been done by God, all that is being done by Him, is done by all of God. He does not divide Himself to perform a work, but always works in the total unity of His being. We must not be guilty of thinking that one part of Him works while another part is inactive. We will now note how the *kai* explicative principle emphasizes these truths, and how much glorious truth has been covered by failure to take it into account.

Consider the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 8:6, which I will give in a more accurate version. **"Nevertheless, for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom are all these, and we for Him, even (*kat*) one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all these, and we through Him."** The rule of grammar set forth above applies here. The word "Father" has the definite article, the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ" does not. Both are of the nominative case. Thus the words "Lord Jesus Christ" are a further description of "one God, the Father."

In Eph. 1:2 we find a use of *kai* which is quite revealing: Paul says "Grace be to you, even (*kai*) peace, from God our Father, even (*kai*) the Lord Jesus Christ. Since "peace" is one of the graces, he explains that peace is the grace that he desires for

them. And since there cannot be two givers of grace and peace, he makes it plain that "God our Father" is "the Lord Jesus Christ."

In Ephesians 4:32 much truth would be lost if *kai* were not translated "even." Here Paul exhorts them: "**And become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, dealing graciously with one another, even (*kai*) as God also in Christ deals graciously with you.**" This should be regarded as the expegetical use of *kai* which adds an explanation following a statement in order to make its meaning perfectly clear. We do not need to ask how God wants us to deal graciously with others. We have been told.

In Colossians 1:2 we find *kai* in a very illuminating occurrence. This should read "**To the saints in Colosse, even (*kai*) believing brethren in Christ.**" Here the words "believing brethren" are an explanation of "to the saints."

In 2 Tim. 4:1 we find Paul charging Timothy "**before God, and (*kai*) the Lord Jesus Christ.**" Here "God" has the article and "Jesus Christ" does not. The construction here demands that these two names refer to the same person. The second name explains what Paul meant when he said "God". He would not solemnly charge Timothy before two masters. While two names are used the verb translated "is about to judge" (*mellontos krinein*) is singular.

In the second part of 2 Tim. 4: 1 the two nouns translated "appearing" and "kingdom" have the definite article with the explicative *kai in* between. I would freely translate this: "**Who is about to be judging the living and the dead at His blazing forth, that is to say, His kingdom.** It is the blazing forth of the glory of our great God and Savior that introduces the kingdom and becomes the foundation of all that follows. It is the primary event, the results of which will be manifest in perpetuity under God's government.

In Titus 2:13 it may seem that we are instructed to live looking for two things, but this is not so, "The blessed hope" has the article, the "blazing forth of the glory" does not. The blessed hope is the *epiphaneia*, the same event described in Isa. 40:5. Following this we read of "**the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.**" If we follow Granville Sharp's rule here this will have to read "the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ." There is no stronger testimony to the Deity of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ than that which we find in Paul's short epistle to Titus.

In 2 Peter 1: 1 we read of "**the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.**" This might lead some to conclude that two persons are mentioned here and that our Savior is not God. The Greek text here conforms to Sharp's rule. The words "Savior Jesus Christ" refer to the same person as the name "God" refers to.

This should read "**Our God and Savior Jesus Christ**," the pronoun "our" referring to both "God" and "Savior." Truly our God is our Savior. The rules of syntax and grammar require us to so read it here, and believe it.

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