**WHAT’S UP?**

***God’s Chosen Language In The Fullness of Time***

You lovers of the English language might enjoy this. If you have never heard of a polysemy you are hardly alone. Few folks have. What it means is that the same word, even spelled the same way, and pronounced the same, has multiple meanings that are not at all alike.

For instance, is a bank a financial institution, or the incline of a hill? Is a mole a small burrowing mammal, or a spot of pigmentation on your skin? Is a crane a bird with a long neck, or construction equipment that lifts heavy objects? Is a mouse a rodent with whiskers, or a computer device that moves the cursor?

The English language is a funny thing. But let me give you a real doozy I read (or is that red?) one time that takes the prize.

A two-letter word that perhaps has more meanings than any other word is '***UP***.'
It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list.
But when we wake UP in the morning, why do we get UP?
At a meeting, why does a topic come UP?
Why is the lady in the back asked to speak UP?
Why are the officers UP for election?
Why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?
Why do we call UP our friends?
Why do we brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver; warm UP leftovers and clean UP the kitchen?
Why do we lock UP the house and ask our mechanic to fix UP the sputtering car?

People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses.
To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special.
And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP.
We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night.

We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP! To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4th of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it wets the earth and often messes things UP. When it doesn't rain for a while, things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP because now my time is UP, so… I’ll shut UP!

I found the above little ditty on the English language fascinating. Not only is English a very confusing language to the first-time learner, at times it is downright insane.

Which brings me to my point. What if God had chosen to write the New Testament in English instead of Koine (i.e. common) Greek? The old Greek, which is now extinct (no one speaks that kind of Greek anymore), was a far more precise language, and was perfect for delivering God’s message to man.

For instance, we use “*LOVE*” in such confusing ways: “I love fried chicken” and “I love my wife.” Do I love Benita the same way I love a dead bird? Silly, huh? But Greek has four words for love: ***eros*** (romantic), ***storge*** (family), ***philio*** (friendship), and ***agape*** (sacrificial). God so “*loved*” the world He gave His Son. The English would lose its deep, reverent meaning. Using it with the sacrificial meaning attached makes all the difference. God didn’t love me romantically, or just as a friend, but unconditionally through the sacrifice of His Son. He AGAPE’d me, not just PHILIO’d me.

Koine Greek is the language God chose. Koine (coin-a) means “common” for it was the language of the common man in the Mediterranean world of the first century. The peasant, the working man, the slave, and the housewife all spoke Koine Greek. God wanted His gospel to be accessible to everyone so He perfectly planned for Alexander the Great to conquer the world and spread a common language that everyone in the next Empire (Rome) could read and speak. While Rome conquered many languages, and spoke Latin, God planned a “common” tongue that would enable the gospel to spread to the world (Mk. 15:15). It did (Col. 1:5-6,23).

I, for one, am so glad the New Testament was not written in English. That would be so confusing. Can you imagine using the following words in our Bibles today?

Bark (is that the covering of a tree, or the dog keeping you awake?)
Jam (is that a fruit paste on your toast, or you stuck in traffic, or hurting your thumb?)
Mine (is that an adjective describing what’s yours, or a mineral shaft, or a buried bomb?)
Bolt (is that a metal fastener, or a ray of lightening, or how fast you can run?)
Season (is that spring and summer, or spicing up your casserole?)
Novel (is that a noun describing your book, or adjective explaining your new idea?)
Draft (is that the wind from the window, or blueprint drawing, or NFL selection process?)
Sow (is that your female pig, or planting your seed in spring time?)
Bass (is that the fish you caught for dinner, or the voice you sang at church?)

Minute (is that your small insignificant problem, or 60 ticks on your clock?)
Bow (is that a tie for your tuxedo, a curtsey by an actor, or a weapon to shoot arrows?)

Brethren, the next time you pick UP your Bible please BOW your head and thank God He gave us the Word in a language rich in meaning. Don’t misunderstand, I’m glad I speak English. But while I truly love my wife, and love fried chicken, I am glad we can use context to distinguish the meaning behind the word. I prey (or pray) Benita makes that distinction when I say, “Eye (or I) love ewe (or you).” If knot (or not), forgive me deer (or dear). Sea (or see), English can bee (or be) sew (or so) confusing. Help!

Galatians 4:4-5 beautifully describes God’s omniscient plan regarding the writing of the New Testament in history’s perfect SEASON. “*But when* ***the fullness of the time had come****, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*.”

God so AGAPE’d the world. Now that makes sense.

Onward and **UP**ward. – Rick