

Greek Word Studies:

Amazed (1605) (ekplesso from ek = out + plesso = strike) (imperfect tense) means strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away, force out or cast off by a blow.

Some versions render it astonished which is a good translation of ekplesso. It is interesting to note that our English word "astonish" which is derived from the Latin word extonare meaning to strike with thunder! What a picture of Jesus' radical message which must have struck His hearers like thunder!

Figuratively ekplesso means to drive out of one's senses by a sudden shock or strong feeling, or "to be exceedingly struck in mind". It means to cause to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed (struck out of one's senses). It encompasses the ideas of wonder, astonishment or amazement. Ekplesso expresses a stunned amazement that leaves the subject unable to grasp what is happening.

Thayer writes that ekplesso is...

common in Greek from Homer down; properly, to strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away; to cast off by a blow, to drive out; commonly, to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with panic, shock, astonish; passive to be struck with astonishment, astonished, amazed.

The audience was astounded, overwhelmed, besides themselves, totally dumbfounded by Jesus' words. So was John Newton (Brief bio)...

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

â€™Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
â€™Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When weâ€™ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
Weâ€™ve no less days to sing Godâ€™s praise
Than when weâ€™d first begun.

When we the readers today really comprehend what Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount, we should be

amazed and astonished also by His gracious (grace filled) word! If we aren't astonished at the revolutionary character of Jesus' sermon, then frankly we have probably not truly heard or truly grasped Jesus' intended meaning! As Jesus said repeatedly in the letters to the seven churches of the Revelation...

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (see note Revelation 2:7)

It is notable that most of the 13 NT uses (see below) of ekplesso are a reaction (most often of an uncommitted listener) to Jesus' teaching even the passage in Acts 13:12 in which Luke records...

Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened (Acts 13:8 Elymas the magician blinded by Paul), being amazed (ekplesso) at the teaching of the Lord (Note that it was Paul who was teaching and yet the phrase "teaching of the Lord" as if the Lord were teaching through him. Would it be that every pastor had a similar dynamic when they spoke from the pulpit)

Ekplesso is used 13 times in the NT (see below) and is translated: amazed, 5; astonished, 8. There are 4 uses in the Apocrypha and one in the Septuagint (LXX) (Eccl 7:16)

Here are all the NT uses for your review (read the context or surrounding passages to understand why there was amazement or astonishment)...

Matthew 7:28 The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching;

Matthew 13:54 And coming to His home town He began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they became astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom, and these miraculous powers? Read on for more reactions...

Matthew 13:55 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57 And they took offense (verb skandalizo - see noun skandalon = stumbling block) at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his own household." 58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

Matthew 19:25 And when the disciples heard this (Jesus' teaching that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God"), they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"

Matthew 22:33 And when the multitudes heard this (Jesus' teaching that God said "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob '? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."), they were astonished at His teaching.

Mark 1:22 And they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 6:2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?

Mark 7:37 And they were utterly (huperperissos = beyond all measure, exceedingly) astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

Mark 10:26 And they (His own disciples) were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"

Mark 11:18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching.

Notice why the chief priests reacted this way: **Mark 11:17** And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."

Luke 2:48 And when they saw Him, they were astonished (they were "dumbfounded"!); and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."

Luke 4:32 and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

Luke 9:43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,

Acts 13:12 Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened (Acts 13:8 Elymas the magician blinded by Paul), being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

Note that it was Paul who was teaching and yet the phrase teaching of the Lord indicates it was as if the Lord Jesus were teaching through Paul! God let it be so, that every pastor reading these words humbly depends on a similar spiritual dynamic when they speak Thy truth to their flock. Amen.

NIDNTT notes that...

The primary meaning of ekplesso is to strike out or expel. The verb is found with this sense in classical Greek (e.g. "enjoyment banishes grief", Thucydides), but it occurs far more frequently with its derived meaning of astound or amaze (i.e. drive out of one's senses by a sudden shock). Among the sources of amazement expressed by ekplesso in non-biblical literature are fear, desire, love, joy and pleasure. Josephus uses ekplesso several times to express amazement or overwhelming fear. (Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan)

A T Robertson commenting on ekplesso writes that Jesus' audience...

listened spell-bound to the end and were left amazed. Note the imperfect tense -- a buzz of astonishment. The verb means literally "were struck out of themselves." (Matthew 7)

Wuest has similar comments noting that...

ekplesso is a very strong word meaning, "to strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away, to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with panic, shock" in a passive sense "to be struck with astonishment, amazed." The verb is in the pictorial imperfect, describing the prolonged amazement of the audience. It is in the passive voice, showing that this amazement was caused by an outside influence, the tremendous impact that the Messiah made upon them by the new type of teacher and teaching that met their eyes and ears.

The teaching of our Lord was in such contrast to that of the Jewish leaders, that the people saw the difference at once, and were almost beside themselves because of it. What a commentary upon the type of teaching they had been receiving, dry, formal, stereotyped, without power, above their heads, and the powerful, simple, interesting thought-arresting teaching of our Lord.

(Commenting on the use of ekplesso in Mark 6:2) "to strike out, expel by a blow, to strike one out of self-possession," in a passive sense, "to be struck with astonishment." The discourse and the miracles of our Lord struck them so forcibly that they were astonished to the point of losing control of themselves. The verb is imperfect, showing that this condition of being beside themselves with amazement continued for some time. It is, "they were continuing to be beside themselves with amazement." The prefixed preposition ek meaning "out," shows an exhausted state of affairs. It reminds one of an automobile tire that has been deflated. Their astonishment was so great that their self-possession was exhausted. In the language of Webster, they were completely flabbergasted. (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

Vincent has a similar analysis of ekplesso, writing that it...

Often meant to drive one out of his senses by a sudden shock, and therefore here of amazement. They were astounded. We have a similar expression, though not so strong: "I was struck with this or that remarkable thing." (Vincent, M. R.. Word Studies in the New Testament)

Crowds (3793)(ochlos) is a gathering of a relatively large number of people, a multitude of men who have flocked together in some place, a throng of people milling around or closely pressed together.