

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Question regarding Ex. 33:20****Question regarding Ex. 33:20 - posted by LoveGodsWay2, on: 2009/3/26 8:32**

I heard a pastor talking about Exodus 33:20 this weekend. At first it, it sounded good. But as I looked into it, I think the pastor is in error.

Quote:

-----20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.  
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The pastor said the Hebrew meaning of the word "live" is "change". So that God was saying that, "No one can see My face and remain the same."

But as I was thinking about it, I asked myself, "Why would God tell Moses, 'You can't see My face. I don't want you to change and become more like me?'" It didn't make sense.

So I looked at the work "live" in the Strong's. The Strong's number are 2425 & 2421. It can mean either "to live" or "to revive".

However, the way it is used in Exodus 33:20, it would have to mean "to live" and NOT "to revive".

I am correct is this?

**Re: Question regarding Ex. 33:20 - posted by adamdawkins, on: 2009/3/26 11:34**

Hey,

I really want to look into this for you this evening (UK time ;)).

If I haven't got back to you by tomorrow please PM me or email me at adamdawkinsmail.com just to make sure I do.

I know this is an odd post but I want to make sure I don't forget!

Adam

**Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2009/3/26 13:50**

From my understanding of "John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Only that in man there is no capacity to see the glory of God and live, except the birthing of Christ in us, then we will see God as He is, "Whom the Son will reveal", and live, not die.

Gaebelein's Annotated Bible  
Exodus 33:1

The words of the Lord, with which this chapter begins, reveal Him as the covenant-keeping Jehovah. He remembers His covenant, though they are a stiff-necked people. Yet He is a holy God and if He were to be in their midst they would be consumed. They had to take the place in self-judgment and acknowledge their guilt and separation from the Holy One. They were obedient to this demand and stripped themselves of their ornaments. In this place they had taken the Lord could show them mercy.

The word "tabernacle" here in this chapter means "tent" and of course is not the real tabernacle, for that had not yet been

n erected. It was a tent which had been used as a place of worship, it now had to occupy a place outside of the camp. All who wanted to seek the Lord had to go to the "tent of meeting," outside of the camp. See Heb 13:13. Christ and His gospel is now rejected; the professing people of God are in rebellion and apostasy; the call, therefore, is to go outside of the camp, bearing His reproach. Christ occupies this place in Laodicea, the phase of Christian profession in these last days. He is outside, standing at the door and knocking. And there, "outside of the camp," the Lord spake unto Moses, as a man speaketh unto his friend. Again he represents Christ as mediator, only our mediator is higher than Moses. And through Christ we have access into His presence. "Outside of the camp" leads to the closest communion with Himself. The Lord talked to Moses out of the cloud and then Moses turned again into the camp. Joshua remained in the tabernacle and did not enter the camp. All is written for our learning. Though we go "outside of the camp" yet we have a solemn duty and responsibility towards those in the camp. May we discharge these.

Moses' prayer pleads now grace, and upon that the Holy One answers graciously. But His face Moses could not see. Read and compare with Joh 1:18; 14:9.

In Christ: Phillip

**Re: Question regarding Ex. 33:20 - posted by LoveGodsWay2, on: 2009/3/26 19:29**

I still need feedback. Thanks!

**Re: - posted by adamdawkins, on: 2009/3/26 21:08**

Hi,

I just wrote a long post on this on the assumption the argument was between "to revive" and "to live", I've now re-read your post and realised the debate was between to live and to change, which is totally unwarranted. I've left the post in below so you can follow the steps I went to in looking into it, but the only way the Hebrew word *chay* changes is through different tenses and contexts, but it is *always* related to the verb 'to live', in all of the research I just did anyway!

As a side note, on a quick search of the KJV there seem to be numerous different Hebrew words for 'change', based on context.

Hope this is still useful,

Adam

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My first step was to take a look at the Hebrew. I'm not very good at it, but I can read it and make out basic words. The nice thing about the Hebrew of the Old Testament is that it's surprisingly simple in its structure, though deep in meaning of course!

The Hebrew for the second part of the verse is pretty clearly "...for no man (Hebrew: "Adam = Mankind" shall see (it) and ..." then we have this word *chay*, which as you rightly identified from *Strong's Concordance* is to live, or causatively 'to revive'.

Note that it doesn't just say it's "to live" or "to revive". Tense has to come into it. Concordances can be dangerous in that sense, I've seen authors like Rob Bell try to take any meaning from the full semantic range of a Hebrew word and fit it in to a context it doesn't belong.

Brown-Drive-Briggs goes into more detail:

Quote:

- 1) to live, have life, remain alive, sustain life, live prosperously, live for ever, be quickened, be alive, be restored to life or health  
1a) (Qal)  
1a1) to live  
1a1a) to have life  
1a1b) to continue in life, remain alive  
1a1c) to sustain life, to live on or upon

- 1a1d) to live (prosperously)
  - 1a2) to revive, be quickened
  - 1a2a) from sickness
  - 1a2b) from discouragement
  - 1a2c) from faintness
  - 1a2d) from death
  - 1b) (Piel)
    - 1b1) to preserve alive, let live
    - 1b2) to give life
    - 1b3) to quicken, revive, refresh
    - 1b3a) to restore to life
    - 1b3b) to cause to grow
    - 1b3c) to restore
    - 1b3d) to revive
  - 1c) (Hiphil)
    - 1c1) to preserve alive, let live
    - 1c2) to quicken, revive
    - 1c2a) to restore (to health)
    - 1c2b) to revive
    - 1c2c) to restore to life
- 

So our dilemma is that, depending on tense and context, one Hebrew word can have quite a range of meanings, as far as I can work out from all of the prefixes and suffixes associated with the various tenses, we only have to concern ourselves with number one.

In part, though this doesn't explicitly answer your question, the problem is a bit with how different the English words are in their meaning, especially when extrapolated upon to make a point.

Let me get on with it, I looked at the KJV concordance. The word occurs 24 times in the Hebrew behind the KJV, translated as:

'live': 15 times,  
'lived': 5 times,  
'liveth': 2 times,  
'life': 1 time,  
'save': 1 time.

Both 'life' and 'save' occur in Nehemiah 6:11, but that's because the KJV puts the phrase "save his life..." where the Hebrew *chay* is, they do this to help explain Nehemiah's question.

The best place I can think to point to is the other references to the Hebrew word, especially when translated "live":

Genesis 3:22, Exodus 1:16, Exodus 33:20, Leviticus 18:5, Numbers 21:8, Deuteronomy 4:42, Deuteronomy 19:4-5 (2), Jeremiah 38:2, Ezekiel 18:13, Ezekiel 18:24, Ezekiel 20:11, Ezekiel 20:13, Ezekiel 20:21, Ezekiel 47:9.

Based on all of these (there's a lot of "shall live"s in there!), I'd feel pretty confident agreeing with you on 'live'. The only way you could change it to 'revive' would be if it was causative, which from the context in Exodus 33:20 doesn't seem to make any sense: "...for none of mankind shall see and be revived" - it just doesn't fit.

Sorry that was long, I just wanted to be transparent about my process so that you know what I'm basing my assumptions on.

I've JUST re-read your post and realised that your pastor wasn't arguing for "revive" but "change"... this certainly isn't warranted in any of the uses seen in the King James, or what I understood the Hebrew to mean.

Adam (again)

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**Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/3/26 21:29**

Just a short note...

It seems the concept that seeing God face to face implied certain death was widely held. Often after seeing either angels or perhaps a theophany, the witnesses were surprised they had lived. Also, Paul notes that God dwells in unapproachable light. I would say that the traditional understanding of "no one can see my face and live" is correct and is consistent with the rest of Biblical passages.

With care in Christ,  
Taylor

**Re: - posted by LoveGodsWay2, on: 2009/3/27 9:47**

Adam & Taylor,

Thank you for your confirmation of what I thought Exodus 33:20 was saying. I appreciate your time with this Adam.

LoveGodWay2

**Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2009/3/27 22:59**

We must all see the face of GOD so we may not live, but that HE may live through us.

Just as Jacob was not afraid of the sun coming, for the face of the MAN whom he was wrestling with would be seen (Gen 32:26).