



Word	Dictionary Form of Word	Meaning	Frequency	Category	Person	Tense	Voice	Mood	Case	Number	Gender	Degree
διεμέριζον	διαμερίζω	to divide, distribute	R	V	3	I	A	I		P		
αὐτὰ	αὐτός	he, she, it; also used as inten.p., himself, herself, itself, themselves; the same one; also an adv. of place: here,	H	PP					A	P	N	
πᾶσιν	πᾶς	all, every (thing, one), whole; always	H	A					D	P	M	
καθότι	καθότι	as, just as, according as, in proportion as, Acts 2:45; 4:35; inasmuch as, Lk. 1:7; 19:9; Acts 2:24;	R	C								
ἄν	ἄν	not easily translated: indicates potential or condition, or a hypothetical situation, as in "Who on	M	χ								
τις	τις	one, anyone, anything; some, someone, something	M	IP					N	S	M	
χρείαν	χρεία	need	L	N					A	S	F	
εἶχεν	ἔχω	(tr.) to have, hold, keep; (intr.) to be	M	V	3	I	A	I		S		

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Greek Verse

Acts 2:45 καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον καὶ διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσιν καθότι ἄν τις χρείαν εἶχεν·

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Word-for-Word  
Translation

Proper Translation

*That is to say, they sold property and belongings, and shared the proceeds with any who had needs.*

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Comments and  
Questions

**Take note of the bottom of the remarks on this verse. I first translated this passage 11 or 12 years ago, and meditated on its significance.**

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*I took the καὶ conjunction as introducing an explanation, or elaboration, of the previous verse. Hence my rendering of "That is to say".*

*τὰ κτήματα and τὰς ὑπάρξεις are both accusative plurals, direct objects of the verb ἐπίπρασκον, an imperfect active indicative.*

*Being imperfect, it points to continuing action. So this didn't all happen in a single hour, or a single day...probably not even in a single week. It was an ongoing activity.*

*While τὰ κτήματα and τὰς ὑπάρξεις could be synonymous, there is a tendency for κτήμα to refer to real estate, and ὑπάρξεις to refer to other types of belongings. If Luke was describing a situation where (as we would expect) not all Christians were land owners, using these two words would indicate that all of the Christians, regardless of their degree of prosperity, were involved in sharing with others.*

αὐτὰ is a neuter accusative plural...but "them" does not make sense in this context. We really don't have a single English word that is a perfect translation here. "The proceeds" is probably the best I can do.

πᾶσιν is a dative, to each, with each.

καθότι even as.

τις any one.

### NET Bible Notes:

The imperfect verb has been translated as "began selling". Since in context this is a description of the beginning of the community of believers, it is more likely that these statements refer to the start of various activities and practices that the early church continued for some time.

It is possible that the first term for property (κτῆματα) refers to real estate (as later usage seems to indicate) while the second term (ὑπάρξεις) refers to possessions in general, but it may also be that the two terms are used together for emphasis, simply indicating that all kinds of possessions were being sold. However, if the first term is more specifically a reference to real estate, it foreshadows the incident with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–11.

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This verse elaborates on vs. 44.

This would both connect with the poor of Jerusalem as well as with people who were from abroad who needed help to stay in Jerusalem a bit longer.

Later, of course, collections were taken up to support the Christians of Jerusalem. Possibly some

impoverished themselves during this time.

But letting the foreigners stay on in Jerusalem to be around the early teaching probably gave a real leg up for the establishment of the church in Mesopotamia and Iran. And we know for sure that the church in this area grew hugely well and with a missionary heart. So perhaps this self-impoverishment was a worthwhile sacrifice.

This is maybe a similar dynamic to that experienced by Mark Dickens who spent decades with YWAM taking the Gospel to Uzbekistan, only to find himself in financial dire straits at age 50.

He commented that he knew he was sacrificing to follow Jesus, but wasn't aware of all the implications of that sacrifice.

But what thoughtful Christian would ever have counselled Mark to play it safe...to do less than to cast himself on Jesus and trust God wholly for his future security?

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From: Mark & Ruth Dickens  
Sent: Monday, February 28, 2011 1:08 PM  
To: Bob Goethe  
Subject: Re: Ruminations

Dear Bob,

Belated thanks for this very apropos word which I am taking to heart. I think your interpretation of the Acts 2 situation and the application to your and my lives is bang on. Thanks for being a friend...

Mark

On 21/11/2010 23:35, Bob Goethe wrote:  
Dear Mark,

I have been incorporating Bible translation into my quiet time for the last good while. My motivation in this has been to rescue Scripture from the obscurity of familiarity. Starting with Greek forces me to slow down and ponder the text a bit more deeply than I otherwise might.

I have had several thoughts from Luke 2 that connect, ultimately, to things you said during our last phone conversation (aspects of which I have pondered repeatedly). Some of these are founded in the passage...and some in imaginative leaps that I have made while pondering the passage.

- There were Jews in Jerusalem for Pentecost from every corner of the old Babylonian/Persian empires, hearing the Good News in their own languages.
- Presumably, most of these had come for the Passover, 50 days prior to this.
- So they had already been in Jerusalem for several weeks, and might have been getting near enough to the end of their resources that it was time to go back home.
- When local Believers sold possessions to share with others, that may not have been only (or maybe not even primarily) to help the poor of Jerusalem...but to help these out-of-towners remain a bit longer so they could be exposed to the teaching of the Apostles.
- From the quality of the early church in the East, you would have to say that this was a good investment for the local Jerusalem Christians to make. Their investment paid off big-time over a period of centuries.
- A decade or two later, Paul is taking up a collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. I speculate that some of the reason these Christians needed a collection was that they had impoverished themselves around the time of that first Pentecost.  
You liquidate your property, you lose the ability to support yourself.
- Would anybody have ever wanted to travel back in time and say to those Jerusalem believers, "Wait a

moment here. You need to play it safe. You need to conserve your finances."

I think not.

- Now we get to Mark Dickens (and to me). You rightly said that you were aware at age 28 that you were casting your lot in with Jesus, and making a sacrifice to follow Jesus that you knew would have implications later on in life.

True enough.

- But if the 50 year old Mark could travel back in time and talk to the 28 year old Mark, would he want to say to himself, "Play it safer. Get a job with a pension. Find ways to follow Jesus that are lower risk"?

I think not.

- Who knows what would have happened to either you or to me had we attempted to play it safe rather than casting ourselves on Jesus when we were 28? With a start like that, would we even be Christians today?

Hard to say.

- Did we both make decisions long ago that leave us today in the same financial/professional situation as men who are currently half our age?

Yes.

- If we could go back in time, would we counsel ourselves differently?

Maybe not.

- Did going to the Philippines for Debbie and Japan for Bob mean that we would marry too late to have children? Yes. Is that an enduring sadness for us? Yes. Does that mean we made bad decisions when we decided to get involved in cross-cultural missions? I think not. If I could go back in time and talk to the younger version of myself, would I counsel myself to do differently? I don't think so.

- The main way that I would indeed counsel myself differently would be to teach myself more about a sound

theology of building the Kingdom in the marketplace. When I graduated from H.S., the thinking was that if anybody was really serious about following Jesus, he would go to Bible school or seminary and "follow Jesus full time" (i.e. in professional ministry).

Upon reflection, I think I regret that I did not take a degree in engineering rather than in divinity. But this is not the same as regretting that I worked for IVCF or as a tent-maker in Japan.

It is the IVCF time + Japan that ultimately positioned me where I am professionally now: with the income level of a junior computer systems analyst, while the people around me, my peers, are retiring.

- And for me, even the bad/inadequate teaching I received around a theology of the marketplace was characteristic of the generation in which I grew up. I was making the best decisions I could with the kind of teaching I received. And the simple truth is that if Christians teach lousy theology to their teenagers, those young people will experience negative consequences of that teaching as their lives unfold. So my life's trajectory is, in part, a consequence of lousy teaching I received as a young person.

Shkataganai.

My conclusions: Jerusalem Christians made a good decision – to cast themselves wholly on Jesus during and after that first Pentecost...even if they needed charitable contributions later on to survive. Their behavior made a real difference to the eastern church. And even if it had NOT made a contribution to the eastern church, it would have still been the right decision.

So for Mark Dickens: I think you made a good decision by investing in YWAM and Uzbekistan, even though you are here at age 50 among the great unwashed masses of post-docs looking for a stable income. Your behavior has also made a real difference to the eastern church. And even if it has NOT made a contribution to the eastern church, it would still have been the right decision.

Well, that's it for me and Acts 2 this Sunday.

Grace & peace to you,



Bob