

## New Testament word study: *bradus*: “slow”

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The word *bradus*: “slow” occurs only 3 times in the New Testament: twice in James 1:19, exhorting to “be slow to speak” and “slow to wrath”, and once in Luke 24:25 (which we quote further below).

It does *not* occur at all in the Septuagint (LXX).

According to *Thayer*, the word *bradus* means “slow” and therefore “dull or inactive in mind”; hence also “stupid, slow to apprehend or believe”.

[*Richard Trench*, in his “Synonyms”, quotes the German scholar Schmidt expressing his ultimate conclusion about *bradus*, “which would best be represented in German by ‘*langsam*’”;

Thus - *Trench* says - *bradus* appears to imply “that no moral fault or blame is necessarily involved in it; so far indeed from this, that of the three occasions on which it is used in the N. T., two are in honour; for to be ‘slow’ to evil things, to rash speaking, or to anger, is a grace, and not the contrary” – *Trench*.

[Note: this conclusion, and *Thayer* including “stupid” (if understood in the sense of low intelligence), we believe unwarranted when searching the full context of *bradus* and its variations – see below].

*Liddell & Scott* has the meaning in classical Greek of “slowness and deliberation, including *slowest* at running; regarding the mind: “dull, sluggish” (noting that in Egypt it was used of illiterates); regarding time: “tardy, late”].

We find the verb *bradunō* (“to be slow, to delay, to be long, to tarry”) only *two* places in the New Testament: in 1 Tim 3:15; “... if I tarry long...”, and 2 Peter 3:9 (quoted below).

It also occurs only *3 times* in the Septuagint (LXX), in Genesis 43:10, where Judah is referring to “lingering “ in Egypt, in Deuteronomy 7:10 (quoted below) and in Isaiah 46:13 (quoted below)

The noun *bradutēs* (“slowness”) occurs only once in the New Testament, namely also in 2 Peter 3:9 (and does *not* occur at all in the Septuagint).

Let us now set out the various passages for our learning:

“**Do not ERR**, my beloved brethren.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

**Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

**WHEREFORE, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow [bradus] to speak, slow [bradus] to wrath.**

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God". (James 1:17-20, KJV).

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"Then He said unto them,

**"O fools, and slow [bradus] of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"**

**And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning HIMSELF"** (Luke 24:25-27, KJV).

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"...If I tarry [bradunō] long..." (1 Timothy 3:15, KJV).

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"...except we had lingered [LXX: bradunō] ..." (Genesis 43:10, KJV).

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"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The LORD did NOT set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

**BUT BECAUSE** the LORD loved you, **AND BECAUSE** He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

KNOW THEREFORE

**THAT** the LORD thy God, He Is God, the faithful God, Which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him

**AND** keep His commandments to a thousand generations;

**AND** repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: **He will not be slack [LXX: bradunō] to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face".**

(Deuteronomy 7:6-10, KJV).

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"Hearken unto Me, ye stouthearted, that are FAR from righteousness:

**I bring near My Righteousness; it shall not be far off,**

**and My Salvation shall not tarry [LXX: bradunō]**

and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory"

(Isaiah 46:13, KJV).

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying,

“Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”.

For this they **WILLINGLY are ignorant of**, that BY THE WORD OF GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

But the Heavens and the earth, which are now, BY THE SAME WORD are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

BUT, BELOVED, **be not ignorant of** this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

**The Lord is *not* slack [bradunō] concerning His promise, as some men count slackness [bradutēs]**

**BUT is LONGSUFFERING to us-ward,  
*not* willing that ANY should perish, *but that* ALL should come to repentance”**  
(2 Peter 3:3-10, KJV).

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The word “slow” [bradus] and its variations, has thus apparently been marked out by the Holy Spirit to signify two things in particular:

1.

*personally* “taking time”. As regards man: “lingering”.

As regards GOD: the *deliberate* “slowness” in unleashing judgment resulting in the perishing of men, thereby “gaining time” for as many as possible to come to repentance.

It is the same principle of mercy and long-suffering, which God exhibited when stating to Abram (Abraham) that the iniquities of the Amorites were not yet filled up (filled to the full – Genesis 15:16).

Conversely: no “slowness” as regards righteousness or salvation, nor in dealing with those “who hate” God.

2.

*mental inclination against* (partly influenced by willful \* ignorance) seeking to understand or know the word of God.

\* [we may infer this also from the word “fools” in Luke 24:25, which is *anoētos*, which signifies “not understanding” (*a [alpha]* as a negative, *noeo*, “to perceive with the mind, understand, to think upon, heed, ponder, consider”), i.e. not applying *nous*, “the mind”].

The apostle Peter – in the context of explaining God's apparent “slackness” - contrasts those, who are “*willingly ignorant*” about that it is *BY* “the Word of God” that the Heavens and the earth are kept in store, with those “Beloved” he addresses, who should “*not be ignorant*”.

In Deuteronomy 7, Israel is exhorted to “KNOW therefore” certain things.

In James, the believers are exhorted to “DO NOT *ERR*” [*planaō*], the *same* word as found in Matthew 22:29:

“Jesus answered and said unto them “**Ye do *ERR*** [*planaō*]  
**NOT knowing the Scriptures, NOR the power of God**”.

In James this exhortation is followed by: “Of His own will begat He us **with the word of truth**...

...**WHEREFORE**, my beloved brethren, let every man **be swift to hear, slow** [*bradus*]  
**to speak, slow** [*bradus*] **to wrath**”.

James is here contrasting “swiftness” to hear the word of truth, with the (positive) and deliberate slowness to speak and to anger.

And in Luke 24, our Lord Jesus Christ says:

“O fools, and **slow** [*bradus*] **of heart to believe ALL** that the prophets have spoken...”.

“Slow” therefore does *not* signify lack of mental ability, but rather signifies a dis-inclination – for whatever reason, but deliberate and partly through willful ignorance – towards the word of God and knowing Scripture.

Such disinclination leads to both loss and error.

It is particularly grievous therein, that it deprives the child of God of believing ALL of the Scriptures – and hence severely limits the understanding of the astonishing, wide-ranging, Age-abiding and magnificent truths pertaining to our risen Lord God and Saviour Christ Jesus.

When our Lord speaks about “the Scriptures” He of course means the Old Testament – because no New Testament Scripture had yet been written.

In fact (and excerpting from our series on “The Secret” [*to mustērion*]):

In man’s tradition, the Scriptures are often read and quoted as if God’s revealed truths contain neither context nor time-elements, or as if whatever God says, is about us. It is blessedly true, that all Scripture is for us; but not all Scripture is about us. Miles Coverdale, in the famous foreword to his 1536 Coverdale Bible, expressed it well:

"It shall greatly help thee to understand Scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after".

It is equally and often forgotten - and if not forgotten, then wholly ignored - that our Lord Jesus Christ issued a solemn warning *which* goes to the heart of much of that teaching today, which *dissociates* the New Testament from the Old - even elevating one part of Scripture to be more "important" than another, or imparting to the words spoken by "*Jesus Himself*" a higher degree of "authority" than other words spoken by Almighty God, or relegating the Old Testament to mere 'myths' and 'fables' of a small Hebrew tribe thousands of years ago, on the basis that "*we believe in Jesus*", and the Old Testament is "for the Jews".

This way of handling God's word is wholly unscriptural and part of *the Falsehood* which the great deceiver and father of all lies, even Satan, malignantly uses to deceive unsuspecting believers and the world alike.

Our Lord squarely emphasizes this:

"IF you believed Moses, you WOULD believe ME, FOR he wrote **about ME**"  
(John 5:46, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

["FOR" *gar*: particle of affirmation and conclusion denoting "truly therefore, verily as the case stands" - *Thayer*].

THEN the Pharisees read Moses - and if they had *believed* what Moses said, they would *also* have believed what the Lord Jesus Christ said, because Moses wrote about HIM.

TODAY the second part of our Lord's statement is particularly relevant:

"But SINCE you do NOT believe what he [Moses] wrote, HOW are you going to believe **what I say?**"  
(John 5:47, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

[*literally*: "but IF his [Moses'] writings ye believe not, HOW shall ye believe MY sayings?" - *Young*; similarly e.g. KJV, ASV, ESV, NASB, Rotherham, Darby, Webster;

The Greek translated "since" or "but if" is *ei* ("if": a primary particle of conditionality) and *de* ("but": a contrasting particle) here connected with "not" (*ou*): *ei de...ou*, thereby expressing (by this connection to *ou*) that the *verb* (here: "to believe") is denied emphatically (*Thayer*) and is antithetic to the thought which follows (as also *Thayer* notes, citing this particular passage).

Hence Rotherham's translation is particularly fine:

“But if in his [Moses'] writings ye are  
not believing, *how* in My sayings will you believe?”

– the implied answer being: “you *can not*”, it being clearly denied in the Greek, that we can believe our Lord's sayings and at the same time *reject* believing Moses' writings].

If we therefore – today – do *not* believe what Moses wrote in the Old Testament, how can we *then* believe what our Lord is saying in the New Testament?

Emphatically, our Lord Jesus Christ tells us here that we cannot.

We may think – in our foolishness and own thoughts – that we *can* believe in the Person and words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament – and willfully remain ignorant or even reject, what the Scriptures says about our Lord and God in the Old Testament.

Moses wrote “*about ME*” (emphatically).

The Old Testament is *all* about the Lord Jesus Christ, as He states:

“the Scriptures...they testify of ME” (John 5:39).

If we want to *know* HIM, we must know *both* the Scriptures *and* the power of God.

Let us not be accused by our Lord of being slow of heart “*to believe*” ALL “*that the Prophets have spoken!*”

Or even worse – being even slower of heart to not even *know* about “*all that the Prophets have spoken*” because we have relegated Moses (The Law), as well as the Prophets and the Psalms, - the very Scriptures our Lord says testify of HIM - to being the “Old” Testament (and thus of “less” or no “real” importance or relevancy, or “for the Jews”) in complete contradiction to the attitude of the very Lord and Saviour we profess to believe.

**“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning HIMSELF”.**

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