

## *Nekros*

- A. The adjective *nekros* (νεκρός) has the following cognates:
1. *Nekroo* (νεκρόω) (verb), “to put to death, mortify, to be worn out.”
  2. *Nekrosis* (νέκρωσις) (noun), “a putting to death, deadness.”
- B. Classical Usage
1. This word group is from the root *nek-* with its basic meaning of trouble, misfortune (cf. Latin *nex*, “murder, death”; *neco*, “to harm”) are derived both the poetic masculine *nekys*, “dead person, corpse,” and *nekros*, with the same meaning.
  2. In Greek *nekros* is a common noun (from Homer) and adjective (from Pindar).
  3. The noun denotes the “dead person or body.”
  4. The adjective means “dead” and is used of men and animals.
  5. It can also be used of things without life, which are *nekra* as distinct from *empsycha* (Plot. Enn. III, 6, 6).
  6. Thus according to Plot. Enn., V, 1, 2 heaven was a soma *nekron* before *psuche* came; *lithos* and *eulon* are also *nekra*, IV, 7, 9.
  7. The figurative, found from the classical period, is much favored by Stoicism.
  8. The false philosopher and his word are *nekros* (Epictetus Diss. III, 23, 28).
  9. So, too, are the false *paideutes* and those taught by him (I, 9, 19).
  10. Evil men were occasionally described as “dead.”
  11. Things of the sensual world (*ta aistheta*) are *euphtharta kai nekra* (M. Ant. II, 12, 1).
  12. Hence man's relationship with *zoa* as distinct from his relationship with God is an *atuches kai nekra sungeneia* (Epictetus Diss. I, 3, 3).
  13. Above all, the *soma* or *somation* of man is a *nekron*, (II, 19, 27; M. Ant. X, 33, 6).
  14. What is *nekros* is what is not controlled by the *psuche*, “soul,” or the *nous*, “mind.”
  15. *Nekros* is the physical part of man, i.e., his *soma*, “body,” which the *nous* has to drag around with itself, the part of man which he has in common with the *zoa*, the animal world, and which separates him from what is divine (cf. Epictetus, Diss. 1, 3, 3; 2, 19, 27; M. Ant. 9, 24).
  16. Even the body, while still alive, came to be called “dead” in this same sense of “destined to die,” and the soul (*psuche*) was referred to as “death-bearing,” because it was considered to be still carrying the body.
  17. Finally *nekros* is also used to describe that which does not accord with one's own standards of judgment, determined by *nous*, e.g. false teachers or philosophers (e.g. Epictetus, Diss. 1, 9, 19; 3, 23, 28).
  18. All 3 definitions are based on the assumption that nothing but the consciousness of the highest and most sublime in us (*nous*) is worthy of being described as alive.
  19. Hence, all that does not come under its control is dead.
  20. Liddel and Scott list the following classical usages (1165-1166):
    - a. Frequently of those killed in battle
    - b. Dying person
    - c. In plural, the dead, as dwellers in the nether world
    - d. As adjective, dead
    - e. Inanimate, inorganic
  21. Evidently to the Greek “dead” meant “dying,” or “leading to death,” or perhaps “not life-giving.”
  22. Similarly, wealth was said to be dead.
- C. LXX Usage
1. In the LXX *nekros* is quite common appearing over 80 times.
  2. It is used mostly as a noun but sometimes as an adjective.
  3. It means the deceased, also the dead body, and the dead in the underworld.
  4. It can also be used for inanimate objects.
  5. Wisdom 15:5, especially, images of false gods, so that idols themselves may be called *nekroi*.
  6. Figuratively, the Rabbis call the ungodly dead.
  7. In the LXX, God will raise the dead.
  8. He is the One who is said to make the dead live.
  9. It usually translates the Hebrew word *muth* (מָוֶת), “dead person,” but also translates several other words suggestive of deceased persons or corpses.
  10. The following is a list of Hebrew words that the *nekros* translates in the LXX:
    - a. *Gawa* (גָּוַע), “death” (Sir. 8:7).

- b. *Haragh* (הָרַט), “slain ones” (Ez. 37:9).
  - c. *Chalal* (חָלַל), “slain” (1 Sm. 31:8; Ez. 11:6).
  - d. *Muth* (מָוַת), “dead” (Gn. 23:6; Ps. 88:5 [87:5], Is. 26:14).
  - e. *N<sup>e</sup>valah* (נִבְלָה), “carcass” (Dt. 28:26; Jer. 19:7).
  - f. *Pegher* (פָּגַר), “corpse” (Is. 34:3).
11. In the LXX the Hellenistic verbal and substantival forms are not found at all.
  12. *Nekros* is consistently used literally of people who are in a state of death (e.g. Abraham’s wife, Gen. 23:3 ff.; *somata nekra*, dead bodies or corpses, 2 Ki. 19:35), whether still visible on earth, or already consigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> compartment of Hades, Torments (Dt. 18:11).
  13. *Nekros* includes recognizable identity, but excludes animation.
  14. Numbers 19 draws an absolute boundary between the sphere of death and that of life.
  15. He who comes directly or indirectly in contact with the dead is unclean, i.e. separated from the Lord.
  16. This marks off Israel’s worship sharply from the cult of the dead and the oracles of the dead which were so common in the surrounding world.
  17. The hope of resurrection from the dead separated the religions of Canaan from the nation of Israel and her worship of the *Jehovah Elohim*.
  18. The dead of the OT resided in Hades which contained 2 compartments:
    - a. Paradise: OT believers
    - b. Torments: OT unbelievers
  19. Paradise is empty because of the victory of Christ at the cross and as a result His resurrection, ascension and session (Eph. 4:7-9).
- D. NT Usage
1. The adjective *nekros* appears 131 times in the NT.
  2. There are 2 word groups, which speak of death in the NT:
    - a. *Thanatos*
    - b. *Nekros*
  3. Both words are used in the NT for spiritual and physical death.
  4. They are synonyms.
  5. The difference in usage between the 2 words is that *thanatos* is always used by the NT writers in reference to our Lord’s voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.
  6. *Nekros* and its word group are never used in relation to the unique voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the cross.
  7. The adjective *nekros* appears approximately 100 times as a noun in the NT.
  8. As a substantive *nekros* means the dead as distinct from the living.
  9. It used as a noun to denote the following:
    - a. Physical death
    - b. Real spiritual death
    - c. Temporal spiritual death
    - d. Human good works
  10. The word is used in relation to resuscitation (Mt. 10:8; 11:5; Jn. 12:1).
  11. It is used quite often in relation to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 22:31; 28:7; Mk. 6:14, 16; 12:25; Lk. 9:7; 16:31; 20:35, 37; 24:46; Jn. 2:22; 5:21, 25; 20:9; 21:14; Ac. 3:15; 4:2, 10; 10:41; 13:30, 34; 17:3, 31, 32; 23:6; 24:15, 21; 26:8, 23; Rm. 1:4; 4:24; 6:4; 7:4; 10:7, 9; 1 Co. 15:13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29, 32, Ga. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 1:18; 2:12; 1 Th. 1:10; 2 Ti. 2:8; Hb. 6:2; 13:20; 1 Pt. 1:3, 21; Rv. 1:5, 18; 2:8).
  12. This adjective is used in reference to the resurrection of the church (1 Co. 15:12, 23, 15, 16; 1 Th. 4:16; Heb. 6:2).
  13. The word is also used in relation to identification with Christ positionally in His death (Rom. 6:4, 9; 8:10).
  14. It is used with reference to identification with Christ experientially in His death (Rom. 6:11; 7:4).
  15. *Nekros* is used by Paul in regards to identification with Christ experientially in His resurrection (Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:14).
  16. Bultmann commenting on the usage of *nekros* in Romans 6 which relates to its use here in Philippians 3:11, writes, “There is a very different use of the adjective *nekros* in R. 6:11: *logizesthe heautous einai nekrous men te hamartia zontas de to theo en Christo Iesou*. The usage in this case is sacramental rather than figurative. To be dead here is death with Christ, i.e., appropriation of the real death of Christ already effected in the sacrament of baptism. R. 6:13 can thus give the admonition: *parastesate heautous to theo*

- hosei ek nekron zontas*, namely, as those who have already anticipated death and resurrection by virtue of their union with Christ. R. 8:11 is to be taken in the same way: *ei de Christos en humin to men soma nekron dia hamartia to de pneuma zoe dia dikaiosunen*, ‘Your body is dead because (by virtue of your fellowship with Christ) you are already dead to sin, i.e., because judgment has already been executed on sin (in your dying with Christ), your spirit is alive because you are (for this reason) pronounced’ (R. 6:7)” (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament volume 4, page 894).
17. Louw and Nida list the following meanings for the adjective *nekros* (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains volume 2):
    - a. Pertaining to being dead – ‘lifeless, dead’ (page 267).
    - b. Pertaining to being utterly useless, with the implication of total lack of purport – ‘useless, futile, vain’ (page 625).
    - c. Pertaining to being unable to respond to any impulse or to perform some function – ‘unable, ineffective, dead, powerless’ (page 679).
  18. Bauer, Gingrich, and Danker (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature pages 534-535):
    - a. Adjective
      - (1) Literally
      - (2) Of living beings
      - (3) Lifeless
      - (4) Figurative
      - (5) Of person
      - (6) Of things, dead works that cannot bring eternal life
    - b. Substantive
      - (1) Literally
      - (2) Figurative
  19. The New Thayers Lexicon of the New Testament (pages 423-424):
    - a. Proper
      - (1) One that has breathed his last, lifeless
      - (2) Deceased, departed, one whose soul is in Hades
      - (3) Destitute of life, without life, inanimate
    - b. Trop.
      - (1) Destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God, because given up to trespasses and sins; inactive as respects doing right
      - (2) Univ. destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative
  20. Moulton lists the following (The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, page 275):
    - a. Dead, without life
    - b. Met. Dead to a thing, no longer devoted to, or under the influence of a thing
    - c. Dead in respect to fruitlessness
    - d. Morally or spiritually dead
    - e. Dead in alienation from God
    - f. Obnoxious to death, mortal
    - g. Causing death and misery, fatal, having a destructive power
  21. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words state, “*nekros* is used of (a) the death of the body, cf. (Jas. 2:26), its most frequent sense: (b) the actual spiritual condition of unsaved men, (Matt. 8:22; John 5:25; Eph. 2:1,5; 5:14; Phil. 3:11; Col. 2:13); cf. (Luke 15:24): (c) the ideal spiritual condition of believers in regard to sin, (Rom. 6:11): (d) a church in declension, inasmuch as in that state it is inactive and barren, (Rev. 3:1): (e) sin, which apart from law cannot produce a sense of guilt, (Rom. 7:8): (f) the body of the believer in contrast to his spirit, (Rom. 8:10): (g) the works of the Law, inasmuch as, however good in themselves, (Rom. 7:13), they cannot produce life, (Heb. 6:1; 9:14): (h) the faith that does not produce works, (Jas. 2:17, 26); cf. (v. 20).”
  22. 8 Classifications of Death in the Scriptures.
    - a. Spiritual death is the imputation of Adam’s sin to our genetically formed old sin nature at the moment of physical birth resulting in spiritual death or the total inability to have a relationship with God in time (Gen. 2:17; Prov. 14:12; Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1, 5).
    - b. Physical death is the separation of the human soul (and in the case of the believer, the human spirit also) from the body (Matt. 8:22; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-21; 2:27, 30).

- c. Second death is the perpetuation of spiritual death into eternity or eternal separation from God and it is the final judgment of the unbelievers in the human race and fallen angels whereby they are cast in the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:12-15).
  - d. Positional death is part of the Baptism of the Spirit which identifies all believers with Christ in His death on the Cross and specifically with His rejection of human good and evil (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; 3:3).
  - e. Operational death is failure to produce divine good on the part of the reversionistic believer under the influence of evil (James 2:26; 1 Tim. 5:6; Eph. 5:14; Rev. 3:1).
  - f. Temporal death is the status of carnality or the believer out of fellowship through personal sin (Rom. 8:6, 13; Eph. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:6; James 1:15; Luke 15:24).
  - g. Sexual death is the inability to copulate (Rom. 4:17-21; Heb. 11:11-12).
  - h. Unique voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the cross (Matt. 27:45-46; Mark 15:34; Phlp. 2:8; Hb. 2:9, 14).
23. Pneumatic death vs. Somatic death.
- a. Physical death is a matter of the sovereignty of God based upon His perfect integrity and omniscient knowledge of all the facts (Psa. 68:19-20).
  - b. In the OT, physical (somatic) death is a consequence of spiritual (pneumatic) death (Gen. 2:17).
  - c. Adam died 930 years after his spiritual death (Gen. 5:5).
  - d. Spiritual death is separation of God as a result of the imputation of Adam's original sin in the garden to our genetically formed old sin nature (Rom. 5:12).
  - e. Adam was created trichotomous but became dichotomous as a result of his disobedience in the garden.
  - f. Regeneration is the creation of a human spirit through faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:7, 16, 36).
  - g. Regeneration solves the problem of spiritual death.
  - h. This is taught in both the Old and New Testaments.
  - i. At physical death, the unbeliever's soul is separated from his physical body and goes to Torments, a compartment of Hades (Luke 16:19-31).
  - j. The ultimate destiny of the unbeliever is the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:12-15).
  - k. At physical death, the believer's soul and human spirit go to be face to face with the Lord in an interim body (2 Cor. 5:8).
  - l. The believer's physical body goes to the grave but is raised incorruptible at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-54).
  - m. God prolongs life for certain believers who have positive volition toward Bible Doctrine and advance to spiritual maturity (Psa. 120:19-20, 23-24; 118:18; Prov. 14:27).
  - n. Death cannot be faced when the norm and standard function of the right lobe (kardia) is destroyed (Lam. 1:19-20).