

Relevant Hebrew Words For Sanctification And Holiness

In Hebrew, the noun “qodes” or “qodesh” means “1. apartness, sacredness, holiness, of God 2. of places set apart as sacred by God’s presence: (a) heavenly abode (Deuteronomy 26:15) (b) on earth (Exodus 3:5) (c) the tabernacle and its courts (Exodus 40:9); tabernacle by itself (Exodus 38:24)...(d) the temple and its precincts (2 Chronicles 29:7) (e) Jerusalem and its hills (Isaiah 52:1) (f) of Zion (Obadiah 17) (g) of holy land (Isaiah 64:10) 3. things consecrated at sacred places: (a) furniture of tabernacle (Exodus 30:29) (b) sacrifices of animals (Numbers 18:17), sacrificial food (Leviticus 21:22), first loaves of new harvest (Leviticus 23:20), fruit of trees of 4th year (Leviticus 19:24) (c) any consecrated thing: vows (Proverbs 20:25), house (Leviticus 27:14), field (Leviticus 27:21), treasures consecrated to treasury or tabernacle (Joshua 6:19), consecrated things in general (Exodus 28:38) (d) anointing oil of priest (Exodus 30:25[twice]), incense (Exodus 30:35), show-bread (1 Samuel 21:5) 4. persons sacred by connection with sacred places: (a) priests (Leviticus 21:6), garments of priesthood (Exodus 28:2), specifically of high priest (Leviticus 16:4), inscription on head piece (Exodus 28:36) (b) of Israel (Jeremiah 2:3), holy adornment (1 Chronicles 16:29), covenant between God and his people (Daniel 11:28, 11:30 [twice]) 5. times consecrated to worship (Exodus 35:2); assembly called at stated times for worship (Exodus 12:16[twice]) 6. of things and persons ceremonially cleansed, and so separated as sacred (1 Samuel 21:5)”.¹

In the above definitions, the word “apartness” means “the state of being set apart or separated from uncleanness or defilement or common use”. The word “consecrated” means “dedicated to God for His use and purposes”. “Abode” refers to a “place of residence or dwelling place”. “Holy adornment” means “the beauty of holiness” mentioned in verses such as 1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalms 29:2 and 96:9. “Ceremonially cleansed” refers to “being cleansed through the sacrifices and ceremonies commanded in the Law of Moses”. Such ceremonial cleansing only worked effectively on the basis of it symbolising Jesus’ future death (see Hebrews 10:1-14).

The noun “qodes” occurs 469 times in the Old Testament.² “Qodes” is translated “*dedicated*” in the King James Version, New King James Version and New American Standard Bible in 1 Kings 7:51, 15:15 (twice), 1 Chronicles 26:20, 26:26, 28:12, 2 Chronicles 5:1 and 15:18 (twice).

In Hebrew, the verb “qadas” or “qadash” means “be hallowed, (be) holy, (be) sanctified; to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate”³ or “be set apart, consecrated”.⁴

In relation to the verb “qadas”, Vine argues, “The traditional understanding of ‘separated’ is only a derived meaning, and not the primary”.⁵ In other words, Vine suggests

¹ Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 872.

² Vine, page 114.

³ Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 786.

⁴ Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 872.

humans or other things are separated from uncleanness and sin only because they are devoted or dedicated or consecrated to God and are purified.

Harris, Archer and Waltke argue that the language origins of the word “qadas” cannot be used to prove it means “to separate”.⁶ But note its usages in various contexts in the Old Testament suggest it does relate partly to separation.

Even before God gave the Mosaic Covenant, He taught His people the great importance of His holiness. Exodus 3:5 records God’s Words to Moses: ***“Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’”***

In Hebrew, the adjective “qadas” or “qadosh” means “sacred, holy”.⁷

Bible Study Question

1. Explain the meaning of the Hebrew word “qodes” or “qodesh”.

⁵ Vine, page 113.

⁶ Harris, Archer and Waltke, pages 786-787.

⁷ Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 872.