

New Testament study of the word “Fornication”

In this study, as in many others, the word “figuratively” must be taken into consideration if we are to understand what the Lord is saying through the written word. When it comes to this particular word study, all words relating to “fornication” in the New Testament are included because their use is often intended to point us to Christ and the relationship of the Bride to the Bridegroom. In each use of “fornication,” or other such terms, the context will usually indicate whether it has to do with the life in the flesh or our relationship with Jesus.

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### **1. Greek #4203**

porneuō (porn-yoo'-o) From G4204

Definition: **“to act the harlot, that is, (literally) indulge unlawful lust (of either sex), or (figuratively) practise idolatry”**

Translated: “commit (fornication)”

### **2. Greek #4204**

pornē (por'-nay) Feminine of G4205

Definition: **“a strumpet; figuratively an idolater”**

Translated: “harlot, whore”

### **3. Greek #4205**

pornos (por'-nos) From pernēmi (to sell; akin to the base of G4097)

Definition: **“a (male) prostitute (as venal), that is, (by analogy) a debauchee (libertine)”**

Translated: “fornicator, whoremonger”

### **4. Greek #4202**

porneia (por-ni'-ah) From G4203

Definition: **“harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively idolatry”**

Translated: "fornication"

## 5. Greek #1608

ekporneuō (ek-porn-yoo'-o) From G1537 and G4203

Definition: "to be utterly unchaste"

Translated: "give self over to fornication"

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1. Greek #4203

porneuō (porn-yoo'-o) From G4204

Definition: "to act the harlot, that is, (literally) indulge unlawful lust (of either sex), or (figuratively) practise idolatry"

Translated: "commit (fornication)"

- The words "commit fornication" were used in both the "authorized" KJV and the Revised version in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication. [Greek: #4202] Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that **committeth fornication** sinneth against his own body."

1 Corinthians 10:8: "Neither let us **commit fornication**, as some of them **committed**, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."

Revelation 2:14, 20: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrifice to idols, and to **commit fornication**. ...But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to **commit fornication**, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

Revelation 18: (2&)3, 9: "And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of devils, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication [Greek; #4202] all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth **committed fornication** with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness. ...And the kings of the earth, who **committed fornication** and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning,"

2. Greek #4204

pornē (por'-nay) Feminine of G4205

Definition: “a strumpet; figuratively an idolater”

Translated: “harlot, whore”

- The word “*harlot*” was used in both the “authorized” KJV and the Revised version in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 6:15-16: “*Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a **harlot**? God forbid. Or know ye not that he that is joined to a **harlot** is one body? For the twain, saith he, shall become one flesh.*”

Hebrews 11:31: “*By faith Rahab the **harlot** perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.*”

James 2:25: “*And in like manner also was not Rahab the **harlot** justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?*”

Matthew 21:31-32: “*Whether of the twain did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the **harlots** go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the **harlots** believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.*”

Luke 15:30: “*But when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy living with **harlots**, thou killedst for him the fatted calf.*”

Revelation 17:5: “*And upon her forehead, a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE **HARLOTS** AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*”

- The word “*whore*” was used 4 times in the “authorized” KJV, changed from “*harlot*” in the Revised version.

Revelation 17:1, 15-16: “*And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither; I will shew thee the judgment of the great **harlot** that sitteth upon many waters: ...And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the **harlot** sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the **harlot**, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire.*”

Revelation 19:2: “*For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great **harlot**, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*”

3. Greek #4205

pornos (por'-nos) From pernēmi (to sell; akin to the base of G4097)

Definition: “a (male) prostitute (as venal), that is, (by analogy) a debauchee (libertine)”

Translated: “fornicator, whoremonger”

- The word “*fornicator*” was used in the next 3 passages in both the “authorized” KJV and the Revised version. This particular word relates solely to the life in the flesh.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11: “I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with **fornicators**: not altogether with the **fornicators** of this world, or with the covetous, and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a **fornicator**, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioners; with such a one no not to eat.” (Notice how Paul emphasizes that we avoid those claiming to be a brother while committing such things. What a powerful message! Just like Jesus, we are to love those in the world and point them to Him. And just like when Jesus walked this earth, it was the “religious” crowd with whom He dealt harshly.)

1 Corinthians 6:9(&10): “Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with man, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (All those things Paul listed are manifestations of unrighteousness or “works of the flesh,” as he said in Galatians 5.)

Hebrews 12:16: “Lest there be any **fornicator**, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright.”

- The word “*whoremonger*” was used in the following verses in the “authorized” KJV. See bold words for its use in the Revised version.

Ephesians 5:5: “For this ye know of a surety, that no **fornicator**, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

1 Timothy 1:10(&11): “For **fornicators**, for abusers of themselves with men, for menstealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine; according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

Hebrews 13:4: “Let marriage be had in honour among all, and let the bed be undefiled: but **fornicators** and adulterers God will judge.”

Revelation 21:8: “For the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and **fornicators**, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Revelation 22:15: “Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the **fornicators**, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.”

4. Greek #4202

porneia (por-ni'-ah) From G4203

Definition: “**harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively idolatry**”

Translated: “fornication”

- The word “*fornication*” was used in the following passages, in both “authorized” KJV and Revised version.

Matthew 5:32: “*But I say unto you, That every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of **fornication**, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.*”

Matthew 19:9: “*And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for **fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.*”

John 8:41: “*Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of **fornication**; we have one Father, even God.*”

Acts 15:20, 29: “*But that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from **fornication**, and from what is strangled, and from blood. ...That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from **fornication**: from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.*”

Acts 21:25: “*But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, we wrote giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from **fornication**.*”

Romans 1:29(&30-32): “*Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection [Greek: ‘hard-hearted towards kindred’], unmerciful: who knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.*” (“Fornication” was inserted by the revisers.)

1 Corinthians 5:1: “*It is actually reported that there is **fornication** among, and such **fornication** as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father’s wife.*”

1 Corinthians 6:13, 18: “*Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both it and them. But the body is not for **fornication**, but for the Lord; and the*

Lord for the body. ...Flee **fornication**. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication [Greek #4203] sinneth against his own body.”

1 Corinthians 7: (1&2): “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of **fornications**, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.”

2 Corinthians 12:21: “Lest, when I come again, my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and **fornication** and lasciviousness which they committed.”

Galatians 5:19(&20-21): “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **fornication**, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Ephesians 5:3(&4): “But **fornication**, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks.”

Colossians 3:5(&6-7): “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; **fornication**, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, the which is idolatry: for which things’ sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: in the which ye also walked aforetime, when ye lived in these things.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3(&4-6): “For this is the will of God. Even your sanctification, that ye abstain from **fornication**: that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles, which know not God; that no man transgress and wrong his brother in the matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.”

Revelation 9:21: “And they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their **fornication**, nor of their thefts.”

Revelation 14:8: “And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, which hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her **fornication**.”

Revelation 17:2, 4: “With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication [Greek #4203], and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her **fornication**. ...And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her **fornication**.”

Revelation 18:3: “For by the wine of the wrath of her **fornication** all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication [Greek; #4203] with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness.

Revelation 19:2: "For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her **fornication**, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

Matthew 15:19(&20): "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, **fornications**, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man."

Mark 7:21(&22-23): "For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, **fornications**, thefts, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man."

5. Greek #1608

ekporneuō (ek-porn-yoo'-o) From G1537 and G4203

Definition: "to be utterly unchaste"

Translated: "give self over to fornication"

Jude 1:7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in having like manner with these **given themselves over to fornication**, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities."