

Vocabulary for Child Development

Feder, Don. "Pocahontas—Disney on the PC Warpath." *Conservative Chronicle*. 5 July 1995, p. 23.

IX. Biblical Vocabulary for Child Development

A. *brephos*

This word is defined by:

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. "brephos":
unborn child, embryo, baby, infant;

Kittel, Gerhard. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. "brephos":

fruit of the body; embryo, small child, infant;

Joseph Henry Thayer, s.v. "brephos":

an unborn child embryo, fetus; a newborn child, an infant, a babe.

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "brephos":

babe in the womb; new-born babe.

The word is used for the embryo of John the Baptist in:

Luke 1:41 - And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby [*brephos*] leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is used for the infancy of Jesus in:

Luke 2:16 - And the shepherds came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the babe [*brephos*] as He lay in the manger.

B. *nepios*

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. "nepios":
Very young children.

Kittel, Gerhard. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. "nepios":

Immature, foolish, inexperienced, without understanding, without power, impotent, weak. Often used for the small child. Hippocrates used it for small children up to 5 or 6. In general use, small children from 1-10.

Joseph Thayer, s.v. "nepios":

Little child, a minor not of age, childish, untaught, unskilled.

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. Greek-English Lexicon, s.v. “nepios”:

Of children up to puberty. With reference to one’s understanding: childish, silly, without foresight, blind.

In past studies of our adoption into the heavenly community we have noted this use of the word:

Galatians 4:1 - Now I say, as long as the heir is a child [**nepios**], he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything.

Paul has an interesting use of the word in in the context of a dissertation to the Corinthians about their obsession with speaking in tongues:

1 Corinthians 14:20 - Brethren, do not be children [**nepios**] in your thinking ...

C. teknon**Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. “teknon”:**

Child, descendants, posterity.

Kittel, Gehard. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “teknon”:

Little child, progeny.

Joseph Thayer, s.v. “teknon”:

Offspring, posterity, children.

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. Greek-English Lexicon, s.v. “teknon”:

A form of address from elders to their younger.

We have already noted an example of how this term is used in the divine mandate to children in:

Colossians 3:20 - Children [**teknon**], be obedient to your parents in all things.

D. huios**Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. “huios”:**

Son; one who is accepted or adopted as a son.

Kittel, Gehard. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “huios”:

Son; young man.

Vine, W. E. Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, s.v. “huios”:

Male offspring; descendants; those who enjoy certain privileges.

Teknon gives prominence to the fact of birth whereas *huios* stresses the dignity and character of the relationship. The difference between believers as “children of God,” and as “sons of God” is brought out in:

Romans 8:14 - All who are being led by the Holy Spirit, these are the sons [huios] of God.

This verse indicates that right thought, decision, and action establishes a rapport between the believer and God. The believer is here called huios. The word teknon is almost a synonym, the difference being that it is used to express the family relationship established at spiritual birth.

Romans 8:16 - The Holy Spirit Himself bears witness with our human spirit that we are children [teknon] of God. Where teknon refers to spiritual relationship with God, huios refers to spiritual rapport with God.

E. pais

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. "pais":

Boy; youth.

Kittel, Gerhard. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "pais":

Small boy or girl.

Zondervan. Analytical Greek Lexicon, s.v. "pais":

A child in respect of age, either male or female, and of all ages from infancy up to manhood.

An example of this general use is seen in the decrees issued by Herod to murder all Jewish children under the age of 2.

Matthew 2:16 - Then Herod became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children [pais] who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under ...

The word is used for our Lord in His youth:

Luke 2:43 - ... as they were returning ... the boy [pais] Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.

F. aner

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. "aner":

Man; husband; a full-grown man; man in contrast to boy.

Kittel, Gerhard. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "aner":

A man; human species; signifies man as opposed to woman; denotes the husband; an adult man as distinct from a boy; full manhood.

Joseph Thayer, s.v. "aner":

With reference to age, to distinguish an adult man from a boy with the added notion also of intelligence and virtue.

Zondervan. Analytical Greek Lexicon, s.v. “aner”:

A male person of full age and stature.

Paul draws the distinction between adult and childish mentalities in:

1 Corinthians 13:11 - When I was a small child [*nepios*], I used to speak as a small child, think as a small child, reason as a small child; when I became a man [*aner*], I did away with childish [*nhpios*] things.

G. teleios**Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. “teleios”:**

Virtuous and perfect; full-grown, mature, adult; of persons who are fully up to standard--perfect, complete, expert; fully developed in a moral sense.

Kittel, Gehard. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “teleios”:

In Greek thought and usage teleios often means “totality.” One who does the “whole” will of God. “Being whole” manifests itself in concrete behaviour; to be undivided in relation to God includes detaching oneself from that which separates from God. The feeling of antiquity was that only an “adult” can be a “full” man. Hence Paul in Colossians 1:28 describes it as the goal of his preaching and teaching to present every man before God or Christ as “complete,” “full-grown.” The “full-grown” ... have the ability to judge between good and evil.

Joseph Thayer, s.v. “teleios”:

Wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect. Full-grown, adult; of full age, mature.

Zondervan. Analytical Greek Lexicon, s.v. “teleios”:

Brought to completion; fully accomplished in Christian enlightenment; without shortcoming in respect of a certain standard; of higher excellence and efficiency.

The impact of both physical and spiritual maturity is conveyed by this word in:

Colossians 1:28 - We proclaim Christ, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect or complete [*teleios*] in Christ.

H. Summary

brephos: fetus; infant

nepios: a child between the ages of 1-13 and immature both intellectually and physically.

teknon: Refers to a minor of any age, from 0-20.

huios: Son. Used to indicate a son who is adopted as heir to the estate of his father. Refers to a son of any age.

pais: Refers to a child of any age but usually of the adolescent, 13-20.

aner: A full-grown adult man.

teleios: An adjective used to describe an adult who is mature in his stream of consciousness in both establishment viewpoint and spiritual wisdom.