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HESSED (KINDNESS - LOVINGKINDNESS)

AS AN ATTRIBUTE OF MAN

AND GOD

by

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INTRODUCTION

HESSED (KINDNESS - LOVINGKINDNESS) AS
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Delimited

This thesis is a study in the field of Old Testament Hebrew Exegesis, Biblical Ethics and Biblical Theology. It is concerning the Hebrew word חסד (transliterated hesed), which the Septuagint translators frequently translated eleos (mercy).

Hesed, as it appears in Leviticus 20:17, is translated "wicked thing" or "shameful thing". In Proverbs 14:34 it is translated "sin". These two instances appear to be inconsistent with the general meaning of hesed and therefore will not be treated in the body of the thesis.

The Septuagint renders the Leviticus passage oneidos, which carries the meaning of "reproach" or "disgrace", while at the same time in Proverbs 14:34 it uses hamartia(sin).

These two references as over against some two hundred sixty positive renderings of hesed indicate that the etymology of hesed (faithful love) is different from that of the word used in Leviticus 20:17, and Proverbs 14:34. In Syriac we find two words hesda meaning "reproach", and hesdha¹ which is the Hebrew hesed (faithful love). The fact that they are homonymous, but etymologically different may account for this extreme diversity of meaning.

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1. Cf. W.R. Smith, The Prophets of Israel, p. 406

Nelson Glueck, in his treatment of these two verses, states in a footnote that "shame" or "reproach" may be that which transgresses a relationship of right and duty.

2. The Significance of the Problem

Hesed, the positive virtue, has been given thirteen various meanings as translated in the Authorized Version. It has been rendered "mercy" 148 times, "kindness" 37, "lovingkindness" 30, "goodness" 12, "kindly" 5, "favour" 3, "merciful" 3, "merciful kindness" 2, "pity" 1, "good deed" 1, "goodliness" 1.

When expressing man's hesed to man, it is usually translated "kindness" or "mercy". When it expresses God's hesed to man, it is rendered "mercy" or "lovingkindness".

The contribution of this thesis will be to determine what "lovingkindness" is, what it means, and what is implied in the kindness of man and the lovingkindness of God. The aim will be to sharpen and crystallize the import of the meaning of hesed by a comparison and contrast with other words of a similar connotation, and finally to reach a conclusion as to the best translation of hesed.

B. The Sources for the Study

The primary sources used in this thesis will be the Hebrew Old Testament, and the Authorized and American Revised translations.

The secondary sources will comprise lexicographical works, and standard commentaries. It happens that for this root the evidence from cognate languages is not essential .

I acknowledge my indebtedness to my adviser Mr. John A. Thompson, under whose direction this work has been done. I am especially grateful to him for sharing parts of his translation of a doctoral dissertation¹ on this subject, in German by Nelson Glueck.

C. The Method of Procedure

The method of procedure in this study will be to classify some representative Scripture passages in which hesed appears, and thus by a study of the text to ascertain its true meaning as an attribute of man and God. The classification falls under two main headings: first, "Concerning Man's Hesed", second, "Concerning God's Hesed".

This study is inductive, and does not include a large bibliography.

The etymology of hesed is obscure, but that in itself does not delimit the thesis, for the concern in this study is to survey the usage to find the most accurate rendition of the word as it now stands.

The main divisions of the material are first, CONCERNING THE HESED OF MAN; second, CONCERNING GOD'S HESED TO MAN; third, COMPARISON OF HESED WITH WORDS OF A SIMILAR MEANING; fourth, THE TRANSLATION OF HESED.

The conclusion will summarize the various hesed uses and relationships and thus show by what word or words hesed can best be translated.

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1. Nelson Glueck, Das Wort hesed in alttestamentlichen Sprachbrauche als menschliche und gottliche gemeinschaftgemässe Verhaltensweise.

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING THE HESSED OF MAN

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A. Introduction

Of the two hundred fortyfive passages in which hesed occurs, at least sixty of them are used in a secular sense. In some cases they denote purely a human relationship, while in others they show human conduct motivated by religious feeling. Hesed is very seldom used in the man to God relationship. However, a few occurrences seem to lend themselves to this conception, therefore it will be given consideration in this chapter.

B. Hesed as a Basis for Mutual Conduct of Men

1. Man's Hesed Toward His Fellow in Giving and Returning Benefits

a. The kindness of Saul is shown toward the Kenites as recorded in I Samuel 15:6. The Kenites probably were included with the Midianites, owing to the fact that Moses' father in law (hoten, Judges 1:16; 4:11) was a Kenite. In Genesis 15:19 they are mentioned as a portion of Abram's seed which was to inherit the promised land. This, together with their association with Moses, accounts at least in part, for their continued alliance with Israel.

At the time when Saul showed kindness to them, they were dwelling with the Amalekites, having come up earlier to be with them as indicated in Judges 1:16. Yahweh had commanded Saul to smite Amalek because he had set himself in the way when Israel came up out of Egypt. But the Kenites were befriended by Saul because they had shown hesed to the

children of Israel at the same time as Amalek had opposed them. Thus their showing of hesed many years prior had warranted the kindness of a man who had the power to destroy them.

This act on the part of Saul was a fulfilment of the promise made by Moses to his father-in-law at Hobab, at the time of Israel's departure on the wilderness journey, for he said, "what good soever Yahweh shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee" (numbers 10:32). In expressing this same idea Schlier has said,

"Thus does every good thing reward itself; nothing remains forgotten; often in later centuries the seed sown in an old past yet everywhere comes up gloriously and children and children's child children derive advantage from the good done by the fathers." 1

b. In II Samuel 10:2, and I Chronicles 19:2 we are told that David's desire was to show hesed unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because Hanun's father had shown hesed to him. It is not certain that Nahash is the same one mentioned in I Samuel 11:1-11, for as Josephus states, Nahash was killed in the rout of his army by the men of Jabesh.² It may be that Nahash who showed hesed to David was a son of Nahash the warrior. Neither is it known in what way Nahash befriended David unless, as Jewish tradition states, he protected one of David's brothers during the massacre by the king of Moab.³

The showing of hesed to Hanun, though inspired by a pure motive, did not bring a favorable reaction, for as the following verses in II Samuel 10 state, Hanun shaved off one half of the beards of David's men

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1. C.F.D. Erdman, The Books of Samuel (A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, J.P. Lange and P. Schaff, general editors). Translated and enlarged and edited by C.H. Toy and J.A. Broadus. Vol. V. p. 212
2. Cf. George Grove, Nahash (Dictionary of the Bible, Wm. Smith), Vol. 3, p. 2053
3. Cf. Ibid

and cut off their garments in the middle. As an expression of David's feeling it might be said that "nothing is so offensive as a wanton insult¹ in return for respect and kindness."

However, even though David's showing of hesed to Hanun was misunderstood he was rewarded by the kindness of Shobi, another son of Nahash (II Samuel 17:27-29). At a time when David's people were hungry, weary and thirsty in the wilderness, Shobi gave them a place to rest and plenty to eat. This is true evidence of genuine fidelity to one who is in trouble.

c. In II Samuel 16:17 Absalom said to Hushai "Is this thy hesed to thy friend?" In the preceding verse Hushai had said to Absalom, "God save the king, God save the king," referring, of course, to Absalom. Absalom could not understand a hesed which could so quickly turn Hushai from the friendship of David (II Samuel 15:37) to that of Absalom. Perhaps even Absalom was suspicious of Hushai's motive, and it was true that David had sent Hushai to pretend an adherence to the cause of Absalom, that the counsel of Ahithophel might be defeated. Hushai's advice was preferred to that of Ahithophel and resulted in Absalom's destruction. It was successfully executed because of Hushai's hesed to David, the same hesed which Absalom felt sure could not permit Hushai to forsake David for himself.

d. In Psalm 109:16, David tells of the calamity which shall befall him who does not remember to show hesed even to the poor and needy man, but on the contrary, persecuted him and sought to slay the broken in heart. Such a man shall be remembered before the Lord continually for his iniquity and at the same time shall be remembered by no one on earth. Because he

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1. C.F.D. Erdman, op. cit. Vol. V, p.462

loved cursing and delighted not in blessing, even so shall he be cursed. However it is not primarily because of his negative attitude toward the poor and needy man that he is cursed, but because he failed to show hesed. As we see in Genesis 32:29 God blessed Jacob when he sought divine blessing. But the same God cursed those who transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance and broke the everlasting covenant (Isaiah 24:5, 6). Hesed is therefore a quality which God expects man to show to his fellow man, if he desires God's blessing.

e. Hesed is also used by the psalmist (Psalm 141:5) as the spirit in which a righteous man corrects and reproves his friend. It is in such an attitude of kindness that the smiting of a friend becomes an excellent oil. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel" -- (Proverbs 27:9).

f. Dr. Conant's rendering of Job 6:14 helps to clarify the meaning without doing any injustice to the text. "Unto the faint, love still is¹ due from friends, Even though he had the fear of God forsaken."

Literally, "to him that melteth" (lamas), kindness and pity should be shown by his friends. It is our ethical duty to show hesed to him who is in need of help. The nature of the quality of such hesed was exemplified by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:34) when he showed kindness to him² who had fallen into the hands of robbers. Jesus asked the lawyer which of the three had been a neighbor to him who fell among thieves, the priest who passed by on the other side; the Levite who looked at him and passed by on the other side; or the Samaritan who cared for him. The lawyer

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1. Otto Zöckler, The Book of Job (A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures - J.P. Lange and P. Schaff, general editors). Trans. by I.J. Evans, Vol. VIII, p. 63
2. Cf. R.B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament, p. 182

replied, "The one who showed mercy on him" (ho poiesas to eleos met auton -- Luke 10:37). Hesed is a quality in friendship which inspires one to help his brother in a time of need.

2. The Hesed Relationship Between Relatives

a. The experience of Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech as recorded in Genesis, chapter 20, is interesting from several points of view. Some would feel that each one of the three had sinned; first, Abraham in leading Abimelech to think that Sarah was none other than his sister, for she was his half sister (Genesis 20:12), and also his wife; second, that Sarah sinned in not raising an objection to being taken by Abimelech, for she also said that Abraham was her brother; and third, that Abimelech, sinned in taking another man's wife to himself. But when God intervened and showed Abimelech that Sarah was Abraham's wife, they three came together to be reinstated both from a human standpoint and in the sight of God. In explaining his case to Abimelech, Abraham told of the understanding which he had with Sarah,

"And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house that I said unto her, This is thy hesed which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother" (Genesis 20:13) .

There existed between Abraham and Sarah a hesed relationship which inspired Sarah to endanger her own character in order to protect the life of Abraham. When Abraham and Sarah sojourned in Gerar they were of the impression that the fear of God was not in that place (Genesis 20:11), hence they were afraid that the inhabitants of Gerar would slay Abraham for his wife's sake. It was in that time of uncertainty that Sarah showed hesed to Abraham and said, "He is my brother."

b. When Abraham was old and well stricken in age, he began making definite plans for his son Isaac, whom the Lord had given him. The important issue as we see it in Genesis, chapter 24, is the securing of a wife for Isaac, who must be of Abraham's kindred. God had promised Abraham that his seed should inherit the promised land (Genesis 12:7), hence Isaac's wife could not be a Canaanite. So Abraham sent his eldest servant, and he went to Mesopotamia which was the city of Abraham's brother, Nahor. The servant having found Rebekah, and having gone to her home for lodging, told her family of his mission. Before he would eat of the meal prepared for him he asked for a response to his request that Rebekah become Isaac's wife.

"And now if ye will deal hesed and truly with my master, tell me and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left," (Genesis 24:49).

The request for Rebekah's hand was granted and all were pleased because Nahor, Abraham's brother had shown hesed to them in giving his granddaughter to be Isaac's wife.

c. In Genesis 50:13, we are told that Jacob's "sons carried him into the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephrom the Hittite, before Mamre." Thus he was placed to rest with Sarah (Genesis 23:19). This act was the result of Jacob's request to Joseph that he show hesed to him by not burying him in Egypt (Genesis 47:29). Joseph sware to Jacob that he would show him hesed by carrying him to Canaan for burial. It was this hesed relationship which gave Jacob complete assurance that his request would be granted.

d. It is in the book of Ruth that we find one of the most beautiful

love stories in Scripture. Ruth is commended by Boaz for having bettered (heytabte) her latter hesed above that at the beginning, in that she had not followed young men, whether poor or rich, after the death of her husband (Ruth 3:10). No doubt she could have had one of the young men of Israel, but it seems that she preferred Boaz who was to her a kinsman-redeemer, Migoalenu (Ruth 2:20).

Boaz seems to intimate that Ruth's action concerning him is even a greater test of her hesed relationship to her own people, than the hesed which she showed toward her mother-in-law, Naomi. It was a natural thing to mourn and show sympathy to her mother-in-law at the time of her husband's death. But it was a greater hesed which she showed when she sought out a goel¹ that the name of her dead one might be raised up upon his inheritance.

3. The Hesed Relationship Between Host and Guest

The prophet Moses had died, and the children of Israel still had not reached the promised land. But God had raised up another to take Moses' place, whose name was Joshua. So long as Joshua obeyed God's law as Moses had commanded him (Joshua 1:7), he need have no fear. For the Lord said,

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (Joshua 1:3).

Then the Lord gave him complete assurance in the word,

"as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5)

It was in the knowledge that he was wholly responsible to God that Joshua undertook to gain the promised land. The second chapter of Joshua tells of his sending spies to search out the land. These spies were

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1. Cf. Paulus Cassel, The Book of Ruth (A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures J.P. Lange and P. Schaff, general editors) Translated by P.H. Steenstra, Vol. IV, p. 42.

sheltered from harm in the home of Rahab, a harlot (Joshua 2:1). When the king of Jericho sent to Rahab to capture the spies, she hid them on the roof of her house. After the pursuers had left she went up to the roof and said to her two guests,

"Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you hesed, that ye will also shew hesed to my father's house, and give me a true token" (Joshua 2:12).

Rahab felt that since she had shown hesed to the spies, she had a right to expect hesed in return. She asked them for a sign (ot) which would be a guarantee of the reality of the hesed which she was requesting. They agreed to reward her with the hesed that she desired (Joshua 2:14), and for a token they said,

"Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee" (Joshua 2:18).

The quality of hesed which they promised her meant the giving of their own life, if they were untrue (Joshua 2:19).

4. The Hesed Relationship Between Those in Covenant Relation

a. Hesed is used three times in the 20th chapter of I Samuel, verses 8, 14, 15 which is an indication of the warm friendship which prevailed between David and Jonathan. The hesed which David requested of Jonathan in verse 8 appears to concern all of their dealings, and not any one particular incident. David feared Saul, Jonathan's father, but because of a covenant made between the two friends (I Samuel 18:3; 23:18), David was assured that Jonathan would be faithful in his hesed. It seems that the one central idea in I Samuel 20:14, 15 is Jonathan's pleading for David's hesed in the future, whatever the outcome of the

strife between Saul and David. This would be the same hesed in return for that which David requested of Jonathan.

b. A dramatic fulfillment of the hesed covenant between David and Jonathan is seen recorded in II Samuel 9:1, 3, 7. David has been made king after many bloody battles, and now has sought out the house of Saul that he might show hesed for Jonathan's sake. Upon being informed that Jonathan's son was there, David asked that Mephibosheth be brought to him. It was then that David truly showed his love for Jonathan, for he said to Jonathan's son,

"Fear not: for I will surely shew thee hesed for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." (II Samuel 9:7)

5. The Hesed Relationship Between Rulers and Subjects

a. Abner was the commander-in-chief of Saul's army (I Samuel 14:50), and was a good warrior. It happened that after the death of king Saul, Abner took Saul's concubine, and Ishbosheth interpreted the act as an implication that Abner wanted the throne. From their conversation, it seems that Abner entertained no such motive. Abner was indignant toward Ishbosheth for the implicit accusation and said,

"Am I a dog's head which against Judah do shew hesed this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me today with a fault concerning this woman" (II Samuel 3:8)?

Abner felt that Ishbosheth had been unfair to him, considering the hesed which he had shown to his ruler, Saul. It seems quite evident that Abner was not seeking the throne, for after refuting Ishbosheth's argument, and causing Ishbosheth to fear him, he immediately sent messengers to David to offer his services in bringing all Israel to David. Abner

had shown true hesed to his master, hence he was bitter when he was rebuked.

b. If Joash the king had not forgotten the hesed which Jehoiada had shown him in helping to repair the temple, he would not have slain Zechariah (II Chronicles 24:22). But he had not remembered Jehoiada's hesed, hence he commanded that Zechariah, a man upon whom the Spirit of God had come, be stoned to death. The recollection of the hesed relationship would undoubtedly have brought peace between Joash and Zechariah.

c. The story of Vashti and Esther is brief, but fascinating. Vashti, the queen, made king Ahasuerus very angry because she would not display her beauty before the people, at his request. Fearing that all wives the country over might assume a degree of independence, the king decided to give her royal estate to another (Esther 1:12, 19). The king then appointed officers in all provinces of his kingdom, that they might gather all the fair young virgins into his palace, so that he might choose a new queen. When Esther appeared before him, there was established a hesed relationship between them. Verse 9 says that she "pleased him and obtained hesed of him".

"And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and hesed in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti" (Esther 2:17).

d. "Hesed and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upholden by hesed" (Proverbs 20:28).

The relationship of a king with his people can best be preserved by hesed and truth. His success as king, and his ability to command respect are determined by the hesed which he shows to his subjects. Schröder

would say that hesed shows "how the relation of the king to his people and of the people to their king can be a blessed one solely through the purity and sincerity of both."¹

C. The Temporality of Man's Hesed

There is one scripture reference in particular which illustrates the fact that man's hesed is perishable. This is in no way derogatory of hesed as an attribute, but simply shows again the finiteness of man. Isaiah 40:6-8 states that,

"All flesh is grass, and all the hesed thereof is as the flower of the field; The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

The central theme of this proclamation is that the hesed of man may fade as a flower, as over against the imperishableness of God's word.²

The nature of this hesed is debatable, but many authorities interpret it as/physical attribute of man. The LXX translates hesed in verse 6 as doxa (glory). It is quoted in I Peter 1:24, and doxa is used there also. The fact that the prophet said "all flesh" withereth as grass, and all hesed fades as a flower, indicates that he undoubtedly referred to the physical being. All other uses of hesed denote an ethical relationship between men and God. This one refers quite definitely to the physical appearance of man, and its mutability.³

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1. Otto Zöckler, The Proverbs of Solomon (A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures -J.P.Lange and P.Schaff, general editors. Trans. and edit. by C.A.Aiken Vol.X,p.183
2. Cf. Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, Vol.II, p.137f
3. Cf. C.W.E. Nügelbach, The Prophet Isaiah (A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures - J. P. Lange and P. Schaff, general editors) Translated with additions by S. T. Lowrie and D. Moore, Vol. XI², p. 424.

D. Hesed as the Faithfulness of Man to Yahweh

Hesed is used in a few instances to show man's faithful love to God. Jeremiah 2:2, and Hosea 6:4,6 are generally quoted to show such a relationship. Hesed is used at least one hundred twenty-six times in the Psalms and all except three of those occurrences show God's hesed to man. The remaining three are concerning man's hesed to man. At no time did the writer of the Psalms use hesed to denote man's relationship to God. The LXX renders each of the three passages eleos. The A.V. translates them kindness, goodness, and mercy respectively. The R. V. uses kindness in Jeremiah, and goodness in each of the Hosea references.

If Jeremiah 2:2 shows man's hesed to God, then He is saying to Israel that He remembers how they were faithful and showed hesed to Him when they were a young nation. Also, in the lifeless wilderness they followed after Him. In verse three He goes on to say that Israel was holiness unto the Lord, but now they have wandered far from the righteous way. It seems that there once prevailed a relationship between Israel and the Lord which was in the nature of hesed, which was exemplified in their loveableness and worship to their God.

In Hosea 6:4, 6 hesed is used in a similar sense. The hesed of Ephraim and Judah has waned early as does the morning cloud and the early dew. Yahweh desires a hesed devotion which is from the heart, and not seen only in outward signs and sacrifices.

If either of these cases is not indicative of man's hesed to God, the same central idea holds nevertheless, namely that God regrets to see Israel's hesed become a temporal quality.

W. R. Smith offers an interesting view of Hebrew philosophy when

he says,

"Jehovah and Israel form, as it were, one community, and hesed is the bond by which the whole community is knit together. It is not necessary to distinguish Jehovah's hesed to Israel, which we would term His grace; Israel's duty of hesed to Jehovah which we would call piety; and the relation of hesed between man and man which embraces the duties of love and mutual consideration. To the Hebrew mind these three are essentially one, and all are comprised in the same covenant."¹

E. The hasid (saint)

Every individual who works hesed is a hasid. He is kind, benevolent, gracious, merciful, pious, godly, holy. He is very much unlike the impious man, but is recognized as a godly man. Hasid is used chiefly of the Godward relationship, while the noun hesed is used in this chapter chiefly of the manward relationship.

1. Contrasted With the Impious

a. Psalm 37:28. For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not hasidayw (pl.); they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."

In this sense we see a contrast of the hasid and resha'im (the impious). For the former it is eternal preservation, and for the latter it is utter banishment.

b. According to Psalm 97:10, the hasid is well protected from the hand of the resha'im. He who loves the Lord hates evil, and is preserved from all danger. See also I Samuel 2:9.

c. The hasid is also one who is good to his own soul (Proverbs 11:17). He is not one to defile his soul and body as does the cruel man.

2. Characteristics of the Godly, or Hasid

a. In Psalm 18:26 the hasid is described as one who is pure, and who

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1.W. R. Smith, The Prophets of Israel, p. 162

can rightfully expect the purity of God to prevail in his own life. Such is God's treatment of the hasid. In the verses immediately following, the Psalmist speaks of God's salvation of the afflicted people; the lighting of the way for those in darkness; and of the perfectness of God's way. It is to those who trust in God that He gives strength, and makes perfect their way.

b. The hasid is like the upright and perfect man for when the hasid is perished out of the earth, there is none upright among men (Micah 7:2). See also Proverbs 20:6; Isaiah 57:1.

F. Summary

The ethical relationship between men, as revealed in man's hesed, is one that is based upon a love which ever inspires the individual to lend aid to him who needs help. It is a dutiful love, not necessarily making love a man's duty, but showing that where the hesed relationship prevails man does his duty to others because of love.

Hesed reveals a bond of friendship and loyalty between relatives; one which keeps them faithful in times of deepest distress. It also inspires them to maintain a pure heritage, as in the story of Ruth.

Hesed shown by a host, even to strangers, is reciprocated with equal hesed from the guest. In appreciation for the hesed shown, the guest faithfully promises to show hesed or forfeit his life.

Whenever two men are bound to each other by a covenant, each rewards the other with hesed. Because of their covenant relationship, each is faithful to the other even when others conspire against the covenant friend.

Man's hesed is almost always used to show his relationship to men

and God, but in Isaiah 40:6 it refers to his physical appearance. It is not primarily a moral quality in this case, though that may be implied.

The hasid is one who exemplifies hesed. He is one who, in contrast to the impious, is recognized as a godly one, a saint.

Hesed is used in a few cases to show man's faithfulness to God. Jeremiah 2:2, and Hosea 6:4,6 are often cited as referring to man's hesed to God. These verses do reveal a lack in the nation who once was "holiness" to the Lord.

Hesed consists in true faithfulness of a man toward men and God.

The elements of hesed are: faithfulness, duty, love, devotion, intercession, kindness.

CHAPTER II

CONCERNING GOD'S HESED TO MAN

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A. Introduction

The hesed of God will be studied as an attribute which transcends in quality, all human attributes.

The first section aims to show that God's hesed always implies action. It is never left in the abstract, but always involves the illustration of an act. The supply of God's hesed is abundant and eternal. The application is seen in the greatness of its extent.

B. It Implies Action

The hesed of God had already been revealed to Lot in the saving of his life from the mob in Sodom (Genesis 19:10, 11). Following this event the two angels, who had earlier been used as God's instruments in saving Lot's life, warned Lot of the imminent danger to him and his family if they remained in Sodom. They advised him to flee to the mountain for safety, but, Lot remembering the miraculous way in which God had magnified His hesed in the saving of his life (Genesis 19:19), asked that he might be given protection in a nearby small city. This request was granted and that city which was later called Zoar, was spared from destruction. Lot speaks to the two angels as though he were talking directly to God. In this case the angels were only the mediators of God's hesed.

One of the favorite and frequently used refrains of the Israelites is, "For he is good, for his hesed endureth forever". The reason for the

popularity of this theme is evident in the fact that God had shown His hesed to them ever since and even before He miraculously delivered them from Egyptian bondage. His every act pointed toward the ultimate good of the Israelite nation. This expression is found recurring many times, for example, in I Chronicles 16:34, 41; II Chronicles 5:13; 7:3,6; Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1,2,3,4,29; 136:1-26 (26 times). In Ezra 3:11 they sang it because they had been released from Exile and the rebuilding of the temple had been begun. God had repeatedly proved His hesed relationship with them. After the completion and dedication of the temple, the repeated goodness of God had made such a marked contrast to the iniquity of Israel, that Ezra fell upon his knees ashamed and blushing as he lifted his face to God in prayer (Ezra 9:5,6). In his prayer he reviewed the guiltiness of his people, but above all of that he remembered how God had shown hesed to them in permitting them to rebuild the temple. The hesed of God is never dormant, but is always seen revealed in action.

1. It Binds as a Covenant

a. Many times has Yahweh clearly warned Israel that they should have no part in the life of polytheistic peoples. In Deuteronomy 7:1-5 the exhortation is given not only to refrain from associating with such nations, but to destroy them utterly. Then in Deuteronomy 7:6-16 Yahweh reviews the fact that they are His chosen people and that because He loved them He brought them up out of Egypt. But the thing which lies behind these facts is that God is eternally faithful and keeps covenant and hesed with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations (Deuteronomy 7:9). Yahweh again recounts the blessings which shall be to Israel if they are obedient to Him, assuring them that

He will keep the covenant and hesed which He swore to their fathers (Deuteronomy 7:12).

b. Psalm 18, if written by David, is a record of many of the times which Yahweh delivered him from the hand of his enemy. The Psalmist praised God because He had done as He promised, in preserving the king and his seed. This song of praise is summarized in verse 51, for the writer recognized that Yahweh's keeping of covenant went hand in hand with His showing of hesed in delivering him from the oppressor. This same hesed will be shown to David's seed for evermore in the blessing of all people.

c. The idea of a covenant relationship is again brought out in Micah 7:20. Micah, prophesying about the eighth century B.C., recalled the fact that centuries ago God had entered into a covenant relation with Israel. Although there had been many inconsistencies in the life of Israel, God still remained faithful and compassionate. In his prayer for the remnant Israel, Micah lays hold of the covenant promise of God that He would give truth to Jacob, and hesed to Abraham, which in turn applies to their posterity. This truth and hesed was sworn, or promised, to the fathers from the days of old, and it is in the knowledge of this covenant that Micah maintains his hope.

2. It Protects from Enemies and Troubles

a. Joseph was one of the purest of Old Testament characters. Shortly after his arrival in Egypt he was sold to Potiphar to be a servant in his house. Joseph was betrayed, and cast into prison by his master. However, he was not punished in the customary manner, but instead found favor in the sight of the prison keeper and was given charge over all the prisoners.

It was not because of sin that Joseph was made a prisoner, but because of his virtue, truth and goodness. Hence the true character of Joseph was rewarded with Yahweh's presence, and the showing of His hesed in tempering the hand and heart of the prison keeper (Genesis 39:21).

b. The song of Moses in Exodus 15 is a stirring expression of a people who have been miraculously delivered from the enemy. In this song the story of the Red Sea is told, and the way in which it protected the Israelites, but engulfed and drowned the pursuing Egyptians. The picture here is the majesty of God as He reserves the power to subdue all earthly forces. His provision for the redemption of Israel is seen in His hesed in which He led them forth from the hand of the enemy (Exodus 15:13).

c. Jeremiah was a prophet prior to and in the early part of the exile of Judah. It is in chapters 30 and 31 that he begins the record of his vision concerning the tribulation days of Israel and Judah. The word of Yahweh came to him saying that Israel and Judah will be led from captivity and restored to the land which was their fathers' (30:3). God promises to be their salvation and withdraw from them His fierce anger. In 31:3 Jeremiah again recognizes Yahweh as speaker, but Yahweh continues to speak through the prophet as though He were never interrupted,

"From afar Yahweh hath appeared to me; and I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with hesed have I drawn thee" (31:3)

Yahweh states that because He has loved them eternally He therefore exercises hesed in delivering them from the hands of their captor.

3. It Preserves Life From Death

a. In the sixth Psalm we hear the cry of one who is suffering intense

pain. There is a question as to the cause of the suffering, whether it was a result of presecution by his enemies, or a result of his having forsaken God. The first part of the Psalm indicates that he is responsible for ~~his~~ misfortune and that his enemies taunt him because God in turn has forsaken him. Hence the Psalmist cries in despair, "return O Yahweh, deliver my soul, oh save me for the sake of thy hesed" (verse 5). Anyone can pray for deliverance, but only one who has previously tasted can appeal to the great hesed of Yahweh. He knew that the hesed of Yahweh was sufficient to save his body from his tormentors.

b. In Psalm 86 the Psalmist prays for preservation of his soul and for guidance into the true way. His promise to the Lord is that he will praise Him with all his heart and glorify His name for evermore. The Psalmist appeals on the basis of God's having shown hesed to him in delivering his soul from Sheol (verse 13).

c. In Job's reply to Bildad, he speaks as though directly to God. Job confessed God's power over men, but protested against God's treatment of him in the light of all the blessings that God had given him. The important emphasis here is Job's recognition that, in spite of all his afflictions, God was the One who had granted him life and hesed. Also that the care of God in an expression of hesed had preserved his spirit from death (10:12). Job's spirit in this case may refer to both his physical and spiritual life, for he was completely down cast. It may include both his "breath" which kept the physical alive, and his inward spirit or "soul".

4. It redeems from Sin

a. In Psalm 25:7 the speaker appears to be satisfied if Yahweh

will forgive the sins of his youth, and his transgressions or rebellions (probably referring to more recent sins), according to His hesed. The Psalmist is conscious that he has committed many sins during his life, thus he asks that, for the sake of Yahweh's hesed, he may be redeemed from sin. Every man stands condemned in sin at one time or another, but he need not be eternally damned. He who sincerely desires to know the right will be guided into truth if he relies on the goodness and hesed of Yahweh.

b. Again in Psalm 51:3 is recorded the cry of one who has done wrong against his God. The secret here is also common in the Psalms, namely that the repentant one seeks mercy, forgiveness and redemption according to the hesed and multitude of the compassions of God.

5. It quickens the Spiritual Life

a. In Psalm 109:26 the Psalmist again calls for help so that his spiritual life might be enriched. He addresses the Deity as Yahweh and then "my God" as he pleads on the ground of God's hesed. He feels sure of the efficiency of God's hesed as a spiritual blessing in bringing salvation to his soul.

b. Probably no other book of the Bible relates such a warm and rich relationship between a people and God as do the Psalms. Probably no one Psalm is more striking in its description of the relationship of the individual to God and His law, than the 119th. God's hesed is expressed in at least fifty-three of the Psalms, but in no other is the personal element more keenly felt. Three verses (41, 88, 124) quite thoroughly express the feeling of the Psalmist as he calls upon his God. God has promised salvation in His word, hence the seeker prays

for the visitation of His hesed (verse 41). Later in verse 88 he asks God to quicken him according to His hesed so that he may not be hindered in his devotion and glorification of God. In verse 124 the servant prays for a knowledge of God's statutes so that he might meet the trials of life successfully. This request reveals a faith in the consistency in divine instruction and the hesed of God.

C. It Is Abundant and Great in Extent

The quality and applicability of God's hesed is seen recorded in Nehemiah 9:17 as it is contrasted to the conduct of Israel. Nehemiah reviews the experiences of the Children of Israel, especially their wilderness journey, telling of the faithfulness of God in providing their every need. But then in verses 16 and 17 he tells how the Israelite fathers became proud, hardened their necks, and refused to obey the commandments of God. They even went so far as to appoint a captain to lead them back into their bondage when the way became hard. They had seemed to lose confidence in God and His servant Moses, and wanted rather to have nothing to do with Him. But, Nehemiah says, in spite of all this "God was ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in hesed, and forsook them not" (9:17).

Jonah's reply to Yahweh in Jonah 4:2 shows that the abundance of God's hesed was recognized even though Jonah was of a contrary mind at that time. After having complied with Yahweh's second request to go to Ninevah, Jonah delivered the message that Ninevah should be overthrown in forty days. The king of Ninevah and his followers became alarmed and immediately repented of their evil and worshipped God. This made Jonah very angry and he prayed to God saying that it had happened just as he

thought it would, namely, that God had repented and had withdrawn His judgment. "I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in hesed, and repentest thee of the evil" (4:2). Aside from the implications as to Jonah's disposition, his reply reveals a knowledge and faith in the abundance of God's hesed.

The thought of the abundance of God's hesed is also expressed in Psalm 103:8 as a summary of the methods of God's dealings with men.

The hesed of God cannot be confined to space or time, thus it can surely be said that it is great in extent. Upon Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem he found it necessary to give instructions concerning the observation of the sabbath. He commanded the merchants and sellers not to do business in God's house on the sabbath, and the Levites to cleanse themselves and keep the gates in order to maintain the sanctity of the sabbath. Then Nehemiah breathed a short prayer to God lest he had overstepped his authority, asking God to remember him and spare him according to the greatness of his hesed (Nehemiah 13:22).

The greatness of God's hesed is evident in His dealings with Moses. God characterized Himself in the giving of the commandments (Exodus 20:6) and again as He appeared to Moses in a cloud (Exodus 34:6,7). Each time the emphasis is upon the fact that His hesed is for thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments, not that it is confined to descendants of the righteous, but is for all people who will keep His commandments.

The greatness of God's hesed is seen in another of Jeremiah's prayers (Jeremiah 32:18). Jeremiah had been cast into prison by Zedekiah, king of Judah, for prophesying the downfall of Jerusalem. God gave Jeremiah a sign that he might be sure of the word of the Lord. Jeremiah

was commanded to buy a field that was in Anathoth because the right of redemption was his to buy it. He purchased it and then presented the evidence to Baruch the son of Meriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the sight of Hanamel his uncle's son. When Jeremiah had done thus, he offered a prayer of praise to God in recognition of the greatness of His hesed for without this sign from God, Jeremiah's faith in the outcome of his prediction, might have waned. But with the revelation of God's hesed, the prophet was reassured that Judah would be restored to their inheritance.

D. It is Everlasting

The prophet Isaiah, prophesying immediately before the exile, warns the kingdoms of the punishment which shall be inflicted upon them as a result of their apostasy. Following that prediction, he relates in Chapter XXXIII the message of Yahweh which was a promise of restoration from captivity, and the renewal of their experience of peace and joy. Yahweh declares that the captivity of Judah and Israel shall return, and rebuild the city of Jerusalem as it was at first (Jeremiah 33:7). He says that this city shall be to Him for a name of joy, for a praise and for a glory, before all nations of the earth. And then as a result of His everlasting faithfulness He states that there shall be heard,

"the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that say, Give thanks to Yahweh of hosts, for Yahweh is good, for his hesed endureth for ever; and of them that bring sacrifices of thanksgiving into the house of Yahweh. For I will cause the captivity of the land to return as at the first, saith Yahweh" (Jeremiah 33:11).

The hesed of Yahweh has been eternally present even though they have not

always enjoyed its benefits. If His hesed were only a temporal quality then the relationship of love would not prevail as is indicated in the happiness of the bride and bridegroom. The joy described in the above-mentioned verse is therefore the result of God's eternal faithfulness towards His people.

This same emphasis is brought out by Isaiah (chapter 54) as he describes the restoration of Israel into fellowship with Yahweh. Israel is again pictured as a bride who has been cast off from the bridegroom, because Yahweh had for a moment become angry with them. But, again His everlasting hesed resumed its sway, and He had mercy on those who had so rudely forsaken Him (54:8).

In Psalm 136 we have the eternal quality of God's hesed mentioned in each of the twenty-six verses. As a song of praise to Yahweh this indicates that Israel had definitely experienced deliverance by their God. They praised Him for His wondrous deeds, His creation, His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, His dethronement of the Canaanite kings and rewarding of Israel with their inheritance, His remembrance of those of low estate and His provision for their needs. After the mention of each item, they sang in chorus of the everlasting hesed of Yahweh. This is an attractive summary of the true feeling of Israel as they are brought face to face with divine care. Their theme centers primarily in God's everlasting hesed.

E. Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to show concretely what the hesed of God implies. It is never left in the abstract, but involves the

illustration of an act. It binds a relationship as does a covenant. The hesed of God protects His own from enemies and troubles, and preserves their life from death. As an attribute of God it makes possible man's redemption from sin. It inspires one to live a deeper spiritual life.

The supply of God's hesed is seen in its abundance, whereas the application can only be measured by saying that it is great in extent. Finally, God's hesed is everlasting, as it provides eternal salvation for all who repent of sin and trust Yahweh.

CHAPTER III

COMPARISON OF HESED WITH WORDS

OF A SIMILAR MEANING

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A. Introduction

Hesed has been studied as an attribute of man and God, and in this chapter it will be compared to words which bear a similar, though not identical, meaning. Five Old Testament words will be studied to discover how closely their meaning resembles that of hesed. Four New Testament words will be considered, as those used most frequently to express the idea of hesed. Three of these words were used by Septuagint translators to render the meaning of hesed, whereas the fourth (agape - love) was not.

No one of these words is being suggested as an adequate substitute for hesed, but by comparison they may help to sharpen its meaning.

B. The Distinction and Parallel of:

1. Emet

The most common meaning given to emet is "truth". It is used to express truth as spoken, as well as being indicative of a relationship. It conveys the meaning of "firmness", "sureness", "faithfulness", "reliability", and "stability". Emet is used in a total of thirty-two verses in which hesed also occurs. It is found many more times in contexts where the hesed idea is predominant.

The following passages are those in which emet and hesed appear together. Genesis 24:27, 49; 32:11; 47:29; Exodus 34:6; Joshua 2:12,14; II Samuel 2:6; 15:20; I Kings 3:6; Psalm 25:10; 26:3; 40:11, 12; 57:4,11; 61:8

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1. Cf. William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 54.

69:14; 85:11; 86:15; 89:15; 108:5; 115:1; 117:2; 138:2; Proverbs 3:3; 14:22; 16:6; 20:28; Isaiah 16:5; Hosea 4:1; Micah 7:20. Of this group two will be selected to show concretely the difference or similarity in emet and hesed - II Samuel 15:20, and Psalm 85:11.

Absalom conspired against his father, the king, with the intention of gaining the kingdom for himself. After having won the hearts of the Israelites through trickery, he was declared king in Hebron (II Sam. 15:10). When king David heard that his people had turned to Absalom, he made ready to flee lest they be destroyed by Absalom's sword. However, there remained many who were loyal to David, and planned to escape with him. Among those was Ittai the Gittite who had joined David's ranks only recently. David felt that Ittai should not bind himself to the dethroned king, and so released him to remain and serve Absalom. David felt that Ittai could live a more normal life if he were to align himself with Absalom, whereas if he were to remain with David he would become a wanderer, going whithersoever he could (II Samuel 15:20; cf. I Samuel 23:13). David's exhortation to Ittai, therefore, was this, "return thou, and take back thy brethren; hesed and emet be with thee" (II Samuel 15:20). In this statement there is implied a feeling of hesed and "faithfulness" on the part of one of short acquaintance.

Psalm 85 is a highly picturesque description of a nation seeking God's hesed . Some scholars have made too much of the personification of the virtues in this passage. However, the aim in this treatment is to show the parallel usage of these attributes. Verse 11 states that, "hesed and emet are met together; sedeq (righteousness) and shalom (peace) have kissed each other". In Psalm 36:6 it is stated that the hesed of

Yahweh is in the heavens. Psalm 85:12 states that emet springs out of the earth. The fact that the Psalmist states that hesed and emet are met together indicates that they have been apart, which strongly intimates that the hesed mentioned here is that of Yahweh. In any case, hesed and emet (faithfulness) have been reconciled, which is a source of great joy to the Psalmist. As in 85:12 sedeq looks down from heaven, and is warmly embraced by peace (85:11), which union is a result of God's working in the heart of man. The blessings of God, and the faithfulness and goodness of men, are strikingly allegorized in the parallel union of hesed and emet; sedeq and shalom.

2. Berit

This word is most commonly translated "covenant". Its usage implies "friendship" between God and man; "a divine constitution or ordinance". It may also carry the meaning of a "compact", "treaty", "alliance",¹ "league", "agreement" or "pledge" between men.

It has been used in a total of thirteen verses in which hesed also occurs. Deuteronomy 7:9,12; I Samuel 20:8; I Kings 8:23; II Chronicles 6:14; Nehemiah 1:5; 9:32; Psalm 25:10; 89:29; 106:45; Isaiah 54:10; 55:3; Daniel 9:4. Of this group, I Kings 8:23 and Isaiah 55:3 will be emphasized as showing the parallelism of hesed and berit.

In his prayer of dedication of the Temple King Solomon begins with an act of praise and recognition of the sovereignty of Yahweh (I Kings 8:23). Solomon rejoices in the fact that there is only one true God, the God of Israel. He does not imply that Yahweh is the greatest of all gods but that He is the only God (cf. Exodus 15:11; Deut. 4:39; 6:4; II Samuel

1. Cf. William Gesenius, op. cit., p. 136 f.

7:22; 22:32; I Kings 8:23, 60: Psalm 86:8; Isaiah 42:8). Then immediately following his ascription to Yahweh, Solomon states that He is the God who keeps berit and hesed with His servants who walk before Him with all their heart (IKings 8:33). It appears that the berit is a faithful bond between God and Israel, whereas divine hesed flows from God into man's life. King Solomon used them as parallels, which proves their great similarity; yet one does not totally coincide with the other.

Isaiah, as a messenger of God's salvation, declares God's promise to Israel, dependent on their response. Previously he has warned them of their destruction if they continue to forsake God, and now in chapter 55 reveals what God will do for them if they repent and seek restoration from bondage. The only requirements which God makes of them is that they hear, come to Him, and accept His offer. God's promise to them, if they respond, is that He will make an eternal berit with them which shall consist in the sure hesed of David. The importance of this passage is seen in the fact that as God is able to show hesed to His own, so He can and will make an eternal berit (covenant) with them.

3. Sedeq

The most common translation of sedeq is "righteousness". It conveys various meanings such as, "the sovereignty of God", "truthfulness", "that which is ethically right", "righteousness in case or cause", "righteousness in government", "a righteous act", "rightness in speech", "righteousness as vindicated in deliverance, victory, prosperity, justification and salvation", and "that which is right, just, normal in weights and measures".¹

Sedeq is used in a total of twelve verses with hesed; I Kings 3:6;

1. Cf. William Gesenius, op. cit., p. 841 f.

Psalms 36:11; 40:11; 85:11; 89:15; 103:17; Proverbs 21:21, 21; Isaiah 16:5; Jeremiah 9:23; Hosea 2:21; 10:12. Two passages, Jeremiah 9:23 and Hosea 10:12, will be used to show the similarity in the meaning of sedeq and hesed.

The prophet Jeremiah was vitally concerned and even heart-broken over the sinful state of Zion (8:18-22). In no uncertain terms he warned them that if they did not repent of their evil practices, and follow the one true God, they were doomed to ruin and exile. He arrived at a climax in 9:23,24 in which Yahweh said that the wise man should not glory in his wisdom, neither the mighty man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches, but that he should glory in the fact that he had understanding and knew Yahweh and had the knowledge that it was Yahweh who exercised hesed, justice, and sedeqah in the earth. Furthermore Yahweh said that it is in giving of these attributes that He delights. Yahweh does not say that wisdom, strength and riches have no place in human life, but He does say that man's chief glory should be in those things which, though unattainable from a human standpoint, are freely offered of God.

Hosea's message was somewhat similar to Jeremiah's. Hosea warned Israel that they would be punished for their idolatry, lawlessness and infidelity; that as a reward for making false covenants, the thorn and thistle would come up on their altars. But, as a positive note and an exhortation, Hosea says, "Sow to yourselves in sedeqah, reap according to hesed; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek Yahweh, till He comes and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12 - also cf. Isaiah 45:8). Hosea seems to say that he who sows in sedeqah will reap according to God's hesed. Reaping is according to sowing, hesed according to sedeq. God's

reward to man therefore, is according to His hesed, not according to man's merit. To sow sedegah refers to their relationship to their fellowmen and to God. His reference to the breaking up of fallow ground indicates that there were possibilities of goodness in Israel that had never been given a chance for expression. The prophet urges them to sow good seed in good ground, first of all, ^{by} seeking Yahweh. However, the agreement is never one sided so long as man does his part, for Yahweh promised that sedegah would spring up among them, or in other words they would be touched with a spirit of welcome, refreshing, blessing and salvation when they returned as penitents. All of this together with hesed will be their reward for a righteous life.

4. Rahamim

Rahamim is most frequently used to show the "compassion" of God. It is less frequently used to show man's compassion. It carries the meaning of brotherhood and brotherly feeling, especially of those born ¹ from the same womb.

Rahamim is used in twelve verses with hesed, Psalm 25:6; 40:12; 51:3; 69:17; 103:4; Isaiah 63:7; Jeremiah 16:5; Lamentations 3:22,32; Daniel 1:9; Hosea 2:21; Zechariah 7:9. The parallelism of rahamim and hesed will be emphasized as shown in Jeremiah 16:5 and Lamentations 3:22.

Yahweh spoke through the prophet Jeremiah in severe warning to Judah, that before they could be restored they must suffer bitter punishment. Sympathy has no place in the punishment which shall befall Judah. They have sinned and brought on their own distress, so that there is no justification for any condolence from their friends. God forbids

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1. Cf. William Gesenius, op. cit., p. 933

Jeremiah to mourn over coming destruction. Devastation and death will be so universal that mourning will be senseless and impossible. The important phase of this message is that no amount of sympathy will avail because of the fact that Yahweh has taken away His peace from this people, even hesed and rahamim (Jeremiah 16:5). In the absence of these two attributes the sinner must suffer.

In his Lamentations, Jeremiah reveals great hope for relief through Yahweh's hesed and rahamim (Lamentations 3:22,32). The translation of this verse (22) is difficult for literally it reads "the heseds of Yahweh that we are not consumed". The Syriac and Targum make the pronoun third person plural instead of first person plural, thus reading, "the heseds of Yahweh verily they are not consumed, or, come not to an end, because His rahamims fail not". Certainly this emendation, as accepted by various critics, makes for smoother syntax as well as being parallel to the following verse which reads, "They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness". It simply means then that Yahweh's hesed will never cease because His rahamim fails not. They are similar attributes, though not identical in function.

5. Hen

Hen is usually translated "grace" or "favour". It conveys the meaning of "elegance", and "acceptance". It is used in phrases with men and with God. It occurs in only four verses with hesed which may help bear out the statement made by W.F. Lofthouse, that hen and hesed are opposites in meaning; that hesed is not used indiscriminately where any kind of favour is desired, but only where there is some recognized tie; that hen

1. Cf. William Gesenius, op. cit., p. 336

is used where there is no tie or claim.¹

The four verses in which hen and hesed occur together have been studied in previous chapters; Genesis 47:29 and Esther 2:17 in Chapter I; Genesis 19:19; 39:21 in Chapter II. It will be necessary to make a general observation on these four verses, namely that in each case hen has been an optional grant, or as Lofthouse has said, it has come out of a situation where there is no recognized claim. Hesed, however, can always be traced back to an earlier promise, negotiation or obligation. Hesed is, therefore, seldom used with hen because the meaning of the former is so much more forceful.

C. Some New Testament Words

Corresponding to Hesed

Hesed has been translated in a majority of cases in the Septuagint, eleos (mercy). This is hardly an adequate rendition of it, because there is no Greek word which thoroughly expresses the hesed concept. However, consideration will be given to four Greek New Testament words which most nearly convey the idea of hesed.

1. Eleos

Eleos is often translated "mercy". The various meanings as given by Thayer are: "Kindness or good will toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them"; "the mercy and clemency of God in providing and offering to men salvation by Christ"; "the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life".² Eleos is used in Matthew 9:13 and 12:7 as a quotation

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1. Cf. W.F. Lofthouse, Hen and hesed in the Old Testament, p. 33.

2. Cf. J.H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 203.

from Hosea 6:6. In this case eleos is definitely used to express hesed. The gospel writer was probably influenced by the Septuagint. St. Luke has also used eleos to express hesed, for in the magnificat (1:50) he quotes Psalm 103:17. Again in 1:72 he used eleos to give the hesed concept as seen in Psalm 106:45. In Luke 10:37, the lawyer states that the neighbor of the unfortunate man was the one who showed eleos to him. This act by the good Samaritan was the fulfilment of the thought expressed by Micah, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love hesed, and to walk humbly with thy God, (Micah 6:8).

2. Charis

Charis is the New Testament word which closely corresponds to the Hebrew word hen, meaning "grace" or "favour". It is properly that which affords "joy", "pleasure", "delight", "sweetness", "charm", "loveliness". In a broader sense it means "good-will", and "lovingkindness". "The New Testament writers use charis pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offences, and bids them accept of eternal salvation through Christ." "Charis is used of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues."¹

As was previously stated, charis is the standing translation of Hebrew hen in the Septuagint.² Greek charis was a happy find for the translators but it doesn't express the whole of hesed.³

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1. J.H. Thayer, op. cit., p. 665 f.

2. Cf. W.F. Lofthouse, op. cit., p. 29.

3. Cf. J.A. Montgomery, Hebrew Hesed and Greek Charis, p. 101.

It is doubtful that charis is used by any New Testament writer in the quotation of an Old Testament passage which refers to hesed. The idea as expressed by St. Luke in Acts 7:10, concerning Joseph's finding of charis in the sight of his overlord, is similar to that in Daniel 1:10 where Daniel found hesed in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.

3. Oiktirmos

Oiktirmos is the Septuagint translation for Hebrew rahamim (compassion). Oiktirmos conveys the meaning of "pity", "compassion", "mercy", "emotions", "longings", "manifestations of pity" and "tender love".¹ It is never used to express hesed, but does bear a similarity of meaning. It is the outcome of an emotional experience, whereas hesed grows out of a broader scope and more concrete experience.

The New Testament use of oiktirmos is limited to a few verses such as Romans 12:1; II Corinthians 1:3; Philippians 2:1; Colossians 3:12; Hebrews 10:28. The dominant thought here is the seeking of God's oiktirmos.

4. Agape

Agape² is a word born within the bosom of revealed religion, occurring first in the Septuagint. It was not used by any heathen writer, neither in Philo nor Josephus. The Septuagint translators have used it in II Samuel 1:26; 13:15; Ecclesiastes 9:1,6; Song 2:4,5,7; 3:5,10; 5:8; 7:6; 8:4,6,7; and Jeremiah 2:2. In each case it was used to translate Hebrew ahaba (love). But the translators also used phileo(love) to render ahaba. There seems to be no real distinction made in their use of agape

1. Cf. J. H. Thayer, op. cit., p. 442.

2. Cf. R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, p. 41

(love), but in Proverbs 8:17 a, both verb forms, agapo and philountas, are used to translate the same Hebrew verb root ahab. If in Proverbs 8:17a it is the Lord who is speaking (cf. I Samuel 2:30; John 14:21) then there has been a distinction made between agapo and phileo. In the Hebrew the verse reads ani ohavay ehab, and in the Septuagint version ego tous eme philountas agapo, which when translated means, "I love (agapo) those who love (phileo) me". One verse such as this is insufficient to prove the case, neither is the New Testament consistent in using agape, but most scholarship gives agape a divine connotation as over against the human relationship expressed by phileo. It may be said that agape expressed the New Testament relationship between Christ and man, which corresponds to the God-man relationship expressed by hesed in the Old Testament.

D. Summary

The aim in this chapter has been to study five Old Testament words which are often used to express a thought similar to that of hesed. The meaning of these words has been illustrated by the study of passages in which they occur.

The next section included a study of four Greek words which most nearly correspond to the Hebrew hesed.

Four of the Hebrew words (emet, berit, sedeq, rahamim) are used quite frequently with hesed and may be regarded as having a similar meaning, whereas hen is used only four times with hesed and differs from hesed in that it is used where there is no tie nor claim.

Three of the Greek words (eleos, charis, and diakonia) were used by the Septuagint translators to represent hesed, but no one of them requires the covenant relationship that is present in hesed. However, these three, along with agape are the most adequate New Testament representations of the hesed relationship.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSLATION OF HESSED

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THE TRANSLATION OF HESED

A. Introduction

As has been stated in a previous chapter, hesed has been given many varied translations. The aim of this chapter is to classify each of the two hundred forty-five passages as falling under either of two main headings, "Concerning Man's Hesed" or "Concerning God's Hesed". Next the aim will be to show how, over a period of years, the translation of hesed has varied in reference to certain verses. For example, hesed in Hosea 10:12 is translated in the Septuagint as Zoes (life), while in the A.V. it is "mercy", and in the A.R.V. "kindness". The verses will be listed according to the books of the Bible under each main heading, followed by the Septuagint translation which appeared about two centuries B.C.; then the Authorized Version dating about 1611; and last the American Revised Version which was completed in 1901.

The verses cited are taken from the Hebrew text, there being in many cases, quite a variation in the verse numbers in the translations.

Next the aim will be to present the principles underlying these translations as a means of organizing the evidence. Following that will be a study of the opinions of various scholars who have made a contribution to this subject.

Finally, in this chapter, an expression shall be given in a concluding statement as to the most adequate representation of hesed, followed by a summary of the chapter.

B. Concerning Man's Hesed

<u>Reference</u>		<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Genesis	20:13	δικαιοσύνην	kindness	kindness
Genesis	21:23	δικαιοσύνην	kindness	kindness
Genesis	24:12	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
Genesis	24:14	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
Genesis	24:49	ἔλεος	kindly	kindly
Genesis	40:14	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
Genesis	47:29	ἐλεημοσύνην	kindly	kindly
Joshua	2:12	ἔλεος	Kindness	kindly
Joshua	2:12	ἔλεος	kindness	kindly
Joshua	2:14	ἔλεος	kindly	kindly
Judges	1:24	ἔλεος	mercy	kindly
Judges	8:35	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
Ruth	3:10	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
ISamuel	15:6	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
I Samuel	20:8	ἔλεος	kindly	kindly
I Samuel	20:14	ἔλεος	kindness	loving-kindness
I Samuel	20:15	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	2:5	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	3:8	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	9:1	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	9:3	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	9:7	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	10:2	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
II Samuel 10:2	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel 16:17	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
I Kings 2:7	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
I Kings 20:31	ἐλεόους	merciful	merciful
I Chronicles 19:2	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
I Chronicles 19:2	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Chronicles 24:22	ἐλεόους	kindness	kindness
II Chronicles 32:32	ἔλεος	goodness	good deeds
II Chronicles 35:26	ἐλπίς	goodness	good deeds
Nehemiah 13:14	ἐλεός	good deeds	good deeds
Esther 2:9	χάριν	kindness	kindness
Esther 2:17	χάριν	favour	kindness
Job 6:14	ἔλεος	pity	kindness
Psalms 109:12	οἰκτίρων	mercy	kindness
Psalms 109:16	ἔλεος	mercy	kindness
Psalms 141:5	ἐλέει	kindness	kindness
Proverbs 3:3	ἐλεημοσύνη	mercy	kindness
Proverbs 11:17	ἐλεήμων	merciful	merciful
Proverbs 14:22	ἔλεον	mercy	mercy
Proverbs 16:6	—	mercy	mercy
Proverbs 19:22	ἐλεημοσύνη	kindness	kindness
Proverbs 20:6	ἐλεήμων	goodness	kindness
Proverbs 20:28	ἐλεημοσύνη	mercy	kindness
Proverbs 20:28	δικαιοσύνη	mercy	kindness

<u>Reference</u>		<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Proverbs	21:21	ἔλεημοσύνης	mercy	kindness
Proverbs	31:26	ἔλεημοσύνη	kindness	kindness
Isaiah	16: 5	ἐλέους	mercy	lovingkindness
Isaiah	40: 6	δόξα	goodliness	goodliness
Isaiah	57: 1	δίκαιοι	merciful	merciful
Jeremiah	2; 2	ἐλέους	kindness	kindness
Daniel	1: 9	ἔλεον	favour	kindness
Hosea	4: 1	ἔλεος	mercy	goodness
Hosea	6: 4	ἔλεος	goodness	goodness
Hosea	6: 6	ἔλεος	mercy	goodness
Hosea	10:12	ζωῆς	mercy	kindness
Hosea	12: 7	ἔλεον	mercy	kindness
Mirah	6: 8	ἔλεον	mercy	kindness
Zechariah	7: 9	ἔλεος	mercy	kindness
Leviticus	20:17	ὄνειδος	wicked thing	shameful thing
Proverbs	14:34	ἁμαρτία	sin	sin

G. Concerning God's Hesed

Genesis	19:19	δικαιοσύνην	mercy	lovingkindness
Genesis	24:27	δικαιοσύνη	mercy	lovingkindness
Genesis	32:11	δικαιοσύνης	mercies	lovingkindness
Genesis	39:21	ἔλεος	mercy	kindness
Exodus	15:13	δικαιοσύνη	mercy	lovingkindness
Exodus	20: 6	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Exodus	34:6	ἔλεος	goodness	lovingkindness

<u>Reference</u>		<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Exodus	34: 7	δίκαιοσύνην	mercy	lovingkindness
Numbers	14:18	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Numbers	14:19	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Deuteronomy	5:10	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Deuteronomy	7: 9	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Deuteronomy	7:12	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Ruth	1: 8	ἔλεος	kindly	kindly
Ruth	2:20	ἔλεος	kindness	kindness
II Samuel	2: 6	ἔλεος	kindness	lovingkindness
II Samuel	7:15	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Samuel	15:20	ἔλεος	mercy	mercy
II Samuel	22:51	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
I Kings	3: 6	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
I Kings	3: 6	ἔλεος	kindness	lovingkindness
I Kings	8:23	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
I Chronicles	16:34	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
I Chronicles	16:41	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
I Chronicles	17:13	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Chronicles	1: 8	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Chronicles	5:13	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Chronicles	6:14	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Chronicles	6:42	ἐλέη	mercies	lovingkindnesses
II Chronicles	7: 3	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Chronicles	7:6	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
II Chronicles	20:21	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness

<u>Reference</u>		<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Ezra	3:11	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Ezra	7:28	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Ezra	9: 9	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Nehemiah	1: 5	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Nehemiah	9:17	ἔλεος	kindness	lovingkindness
Nehemiah	9:32	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Nehemiah	13:22	ἐλεῖος	mercy	lovingkindness
Job	10:12	ἔλεος	favour	lovingkindness
Job	37:13	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	5: 8	ἐλεῖος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	6: 5	ἐλεῖος	mercies	lovingkindness
Psalms	13: 6	ἐλεεί	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	17: 7	ἐλεή	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	18:51	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	21: 8	ἐλεεί	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	23: 6	ἔλεός	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	25: 6	ἐλεή	lovingkindnesses	lovingkindnesses
Psalms	25: 7	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	25:10	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	26: 3	ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	31: 8	ἐλεεί	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	31:17	ἐλεεί	mercies	lovingkindness
Psalms	31:22	ἔλεος	kindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	32:10	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	33: 5	ἐλεῖος	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalms	33:18	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Psalms	33:22 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	36: 6 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	36: 8 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	36:11 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	40:11 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	40:12 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	42: 9 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	44:27 ὀνόματος	mercies	lovingkindness
Psalms	48:10 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	51: 3 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	52: 3 —————	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalms	52:10 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	57: 4 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	57:11 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	59:11 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	59:17 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	59:18 ἔλεος	mercy	mercy
Psalms	61: 8 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	62:13 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	63: 4 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	66:20 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	69:14 ἐλέους	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	69:17 ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms	77: 9 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms	85: 8 ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Psalms 85:11	ἔλεος	mercy	mercy
Psalms 86: 5	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 86:13	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 86:15	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 88:12	ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms 89: 2	ἐλεῖν	mercies	lovingkindness
Psalms 89:3	ἔλεος	mercy	mercy
Psalms 89:15	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 89:25	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 89:29	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 89:34	ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms 89:50	ἐλεῖν	lovingkindnesses	lovingkindnesses
Psalms 90:14	ἐλεόους	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 92: 3	ἔλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms 94:18	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 98: 3	ἐλεόους	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 100: 5	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 101:1	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 103: 4	ἐλεείν	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms 103: 8	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 103:11	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 103:17	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 106: 1	ἔλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 106: 7	ἐλεόους	mercies	lovingkindnesses

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Psalm 106:45	ἐλεός	mercies	lovingkindnesses
Psalm 107: 1	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 107: 8	ἐλεή	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalm 107:15	ἐλεή	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalm 107:21	ἐλεή	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalm 107:31	ἐλεή	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalm 107:43	ἐλεή	lovingkindness	lovingkindnesses
Psalm 108: 5	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 109:21	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 109:26	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 115: 1	ἐλεεί	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 117: 2	ἐλεος	merciful kindness	lovingkindness
Psalm 118: 1	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 118: 2	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 118: 3	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 118: 4	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm- 119:41	ἐλεος	mercies	lovingkindnesses
Psalm 119:64	ἐλεός	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 119:76	ἐλεος	merciful kindness	lovingkindness
Psalm 119:88	ἐλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalm 119:124	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 119:149	ἐλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalm 119:159	ἐλεεί	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalm 130: 7	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalm 136:1-26	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness*

* Hesed appears once in each of the 26 verses of Psalm 136. In each case the Septuagint renders it ἐλεος; the A.V., mercy; the R.V., lovingkindness

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Septuagint</u>	<u>Authorized Version</u>	<u>Revised Version</u>
Psalms 138: 2	ἐλθέει	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms 138: 8	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 143: 8	ἐλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Psalms 143:12	ἐλθέει	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 144: 2	ἐλεος	goodness	lovingkindness
Psalms 145: 8	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Psalms 147:11	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Isaiah 54: 8	ἐλθέει	kindness	lovingkindness
Isaiah 54:10	ἐλεος	kindness	lovingkindness
Isaiah 55 ; 3	πίστα	mercies	mercies
Isaiah 63: 7	ἐλεον	lovingkindnesses	lovingkindnesses
Isaiah 63: 7	δικαιοσύνης	lovingkindnesses	lovingkindnesses
Jeremiah 9:23	ἐλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Jeremiah 16: 5	—	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Jeremiah 31: 3	οἰκτίρημα	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Jeremiah 32:18	ἐλεος	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Jeremiah 33:11	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Lamentations 3:22	ἐλέη	mercies	lovingkindnesses
Lamentations 3:32	ἐλέους	mercies	lovingkindnesses
Daniel 9: 4	ἐλεος	mercy	lovingkindness
Hosea 2:21	ἐλθέει	lovingkindness	lovingkindness
Jonah 2: 9	ἐλεος	mercy	mercy
Jonah 4:2	ἐλεος	kindness	lovingkindness
Micah 7:18	ἐλέους	mercy	lovingkindness
Micah 7:20	ἐλεον	mercy	lovingkindness

D. Principles Underlying These Translations

The use of the word hesed has seen an evolution. The Septuagint translates it eleos, eleon, eleous (mercy) in a total of one hundred eighty-nine passages. The A. V. translates it "mercy" one hundred forty-eight times. However, in the A.R.V. there is a decided change, for we have "mercy" appearing only seven times as over against "lovingkindness" one hundred seventy-five. The translators of the A. R. V. have chosen¹ "lovingkindness" for the passages which show God's hesed to man. Some passages are debatable as to whether or not they show man's or God's hesed. However, the adoption of this word "lovingkindness" (which we owe² to Coverdale, 16th century), and its intended application to God's hesed only, indicates that the earlier scholars (Septuagint and A.V. translators), did not make the distinction that is now being made. The use of "mercy" by the earlier scholars gave hesed a more human connotation than it is now being given, for when Coverdale first introduced the word his intention³ was that it be used to denote God's love to man.

In the Psalter hesed occurs one hundred twenty-three times, and all except three can be classified as showing God's hesed to man. These three are 109:12, 16; 141:5, each of which the A.R.V. translates "kindness". There are three other verses in the Psalms which cannot be dogmatically interpreted as showing God's hesed to man, and which the A.R.V. translates "mercy". They are 59:18; 85:11; 89:3.

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1. cf. J. Hastings, Lovingkindness (Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings editor) Vol. III, p. 158
2. cf. Ibid, P. 158
3. cf. Ibid, p. 158

The two major translations of hesed in the A.R.V. are "lovingkindness" (175) and "kindness" (42). "Kindness" appears to be a more comprehensive term in showing man's hesed than is "mercy", for "mercy" indicates an action motivated by a need. This is truly one aspect of its usage, but not the only one. "Kindness" shows a relationship among individuals or groups which prevails because of a definite hesed feeling irregardless of motive or result.

E. Opinions of the Scholars

The fact that every word has its own personality, and that so often a translation is a very poor representation of the original and true meaning, must frequently be emphasized.¹ The translation of hesed, as evidenced in this chapter, reveals that the word has been interpreted to represent many attributes. However, one factor that is common in most scholarly treatment of this subject, is that it implies a covenant relationship among the parties concerned.

The aim of this section is to cite the opinions of various scholars in order that the meaning of hesed may be sharpened. The arrangement of material is according to thoughts expressed, not according to the time of the contribution.

Dr. Sellers defines hesed as, "treatment one has a right to expect from another on account of blood or covenant relationship."²

Cheyne's concept of it emphasizes more the activity involved in a hesed relationship. "Hesed denotes paternal affection on God's part, answered by filial and loyal affection and brotherly love on man's part."³

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1. Cf, J.A. Montgomery, Hebrew Hesed and Greek Charis, (Harvard Theological Review) Vol. XXXII, p. 101
 2. O.R. Sellers, Biblical Hebrew for Beginners, p. 40
 3. W.L. Walker, Lovingkindness (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia James Orr, editor) Vol. III, p. 1934

In the summary of his second chapter, Nelson Glueck states that, when referring to man, hesed can best be translated: "religiousness", "piety", "humanity", "philanthropy". He also believes that subjectively hesed can appear as "grace", "mercy", "favor", while objectively it remains dutiful, conditioned by divine ethical commands which we have¹ for the human community. In referring to God's hesed, Glueck feels that it is equated to "faithfulness", "righteousness", "justice", "truth". He also believes that God's hesed is close to God's rahamim, but that rahamim lacks the character of faithfulness. Hence he would translate God's hesed as "faithfulness".²

W. F. Lofthouse, in his treatment of hesed, emphasizes the covenant relationship as contrasted to hen (favor) which does not necessarily involve a tie or claim. In speaking of man's hesed he agrees with G. A. Smith in translating it "leal love".³ But, in reference to God's hesed, Lofthouse feels that Glueck hit it when he points out that it is a mutual⁴ relation of rights and duties.

W. R. Smith's translation of hesed has already been referred to in Chapter I of this study. He translates Jehovah's hesed as "grace", and states that man's hesed embraces the duties of love and mutual consideration.⁵ Dr. Smith reveals a little more of his interpretation of hesed in his treatment of Hosea and Amos. He uses hesed and "kindness" interchangeably in speaking of the two prophets. For example he says,

"in Amos this word hesed or 'kindness' never occurs, while in Hosea it not only expresses the right attitude of man to God, but 'kindness' and truth, 'kindness' and justice are the sum of moral duty."⁶

1. Cf. Nelson Glueck, op. cit., Summary of Chapter II

2. Cf. Ibid Summary of Chapter III

3. Cf. W.F.Lofthouse, Hen and Hesed in the Old Testament, (Zeitschrift für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft) N.F. X, p. 33

4. Cf. Ibid p. 35.

5. Cf. W. R. Smith op. cit., p. 162

6. Ibid p. 161

In another place he translates I Samuel 20:8 as follows, "Thou shalt show kindness to thy servant, for thou hast brought thy servant into ¹ a covenant of Jehovah with thee." This appears to be his own conception of man's hesed, for the Septuagint uses eleos, while the A.V. and A.R.V. use "kindly".

The classification of hesed in Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon is under two main headings, "Of Man", and "Of God". Under the first of these the various divisions emphasize the "kindness" of men. In the ² second, the emphasis is on the "lovingkindness" of God.

The A.R.V. translates hesed as "lovingkindness" in every case where the revisers felt that it referred to God's hesed. The result was that they used "lovingkindness" one hundred seventy-five times. The major translation in the A.R.V. when referring to man's hesed is "kindness" forty-two times. This leaves only twenty eight occurrences, nearly all of which are translated by words very similar in meaning to "kindness" and "lovingkindness".

A. F. Kirkpatrick, in his studies of the Psalms, considers only God's hesed, as the hesed of man occurs very few times in this great book. With only three exceptions (Psalm 109:12, 16: 141:5), Kirkpatrick believes ³ that hesed denotes God's "lovingkindness" to man.

J. A. Montgomery feels that "lovingkindness" was an excellent inven-
tion by the translators of the English Bible, as a way of expressing ⁴
hesed. He also states that,

"For expression of hesed in English "kindness" might be the best representative, as signifying the moral obligation along with or even beyond the law." ⁵

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 161
2. Cf. William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament p.338
3. Cf. A.F. Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms, Book I, p. 221
4. Cf. J. A. Montgomery, op cit., p. 97.
5. Ibid p. 101

Driver feels that the A.V.¹ has not accurately represented hesed in translating it "mercy" one hundred forty-eight times. He says that "mercy" is not comprehensive enough to express the full meaning of hesed, but that man's hesed is best rendered by "kindness", and God's hesed by "lovingkindness". According to Driver, the latter term is too strong to be used generally of man.

F. Conclusion as to the Translation of Hesed

The aim of this study has been to gather evidence which would lend itself to the process of determining the most nearly accurate translation of hesed.

It appears that "kindness" has remained the most consistent of the major translations of man's hesed, appearing thirty-seven times in the A. V., and forty-two in the A.R.V. The classification of man's hesed in the Gemenius Lexicon speaks primarily of the "kindness" of man. W.R. Smith uses "kindness" and hesed interchangeably, which indicates that he accepts it as the most adequate translation. J. A. Montgomery states very definitely that he accepts "kindness" as the best rendition of hesed when it refers to man as the actor. S. R. Driver feels that "mercy", which is frequently used in the A.V., does not adequately represent hesed, but that man's hesed is best rendered by "kindness".

The investigation into man's hesed, as in chapter one, has revealed some concrete examples of man's "kindness" to man. For instance the covenant which David had with Jonathan (II Samuel 9:1, 3, 7) was proved by David when he showed "kindness" to Jonathan's son Mephlibosheth. The "kindness" of Ruth toward her mother-in-law is revealed in her marriage to her

1.Cf. S.R. Driver, Commentary on Deuteronomy, p. 102

kinsman Boaz, as a fulfilment of her desire to raise up the name of her dead one upon his inheritance (Ruth 2:20; 3:10).

It is therefore the conclusion in this study that hesed, when referring to man, is best translated "kindness". This term then, is not added to the list of attributes which are usually implied by hesed such as: "religiousness", "piety", "humanity", "philanthropy", "affection", "brotherly love", "dutiful love", "mutual consideration", "covenant relationship", "mercy", "favour", "pity", and "good deeds", but is offered as the best English translation which includes all of these and is comprehensive enough, and capable of expressing any and all hesed relationships of men.

To confine the hesed of God to the human understanding of one single attribute might be a limitation of the implications of the covenant relation which God manifests in the showing of hesed to His own. However, again the aim is to determine the best English translation of the hesed of God.

The A.R.V. has made a decided change in translating hesed "lovingkindness" one hundred seventy-five times as over against thirty in the A.V. The A.R.V. has used "mercy" only seven times as compared to one hundred forty-eight times in the A.V. It has been the intention of the revisers to use "lovingkindness" in every passage that refers to God's hesed. The classification of God's hesed in the Gesenius Lexicon speaks primarily of the "lovingkindness" of God. A.F. Kirkpatrick, in commenting on the Psalms, states that with few exceptions hesed denotes God's "lovingkindness" to man. J. A. Montgomery feels that "lovingkindness" is our best way of expressing what we mean by God's hesed. S. R. Driver states with conviction that the hesed of God is best expressed by "lovingkindness", and that the

term is much too strong to apply to man's hesed. Nelson Glueck proposes "faithfulness" as the best translation of God's hesed. It is truly that, but more than that. "Faithful love" might better express it than "faithfulness" for the element of love is certainly present.

The hesed of God is active, and is greatly magnified in delivering individuals from destruction. Lot trusted the Lord and did not flee to the mountain for the reason that God had already magnified His hesed to Lot in saving his life (Genesis 19:19). In Ezra 3:11 hesed is paralleled with tob (good). Israel was the recipient of God's hesed as it had been manifest in their return from exile and in the prospects of a new house of Yahweh.

The author of this study places the greatest emphasis upon "loving-kindness" as the best English translation of God's hesed. It reveals an act of kindness growing out of a spirit of love, resulting from a hesed covenant between God and His chosen ones. It signifies the love of God revealed in acts of kindness. It includes "faithfulness", "righteousness", "justice", "truth", "mutual relation of rights and duties", and "paternal affection", all of which are comprehended in the term "lovingkindness".

G. Summary

The aim of this chapter was to give the earliest translations (Septuagint) of hesed, followed by two English translations, the A.V. and A.R.V., as means of showing the variation in the rendition of hesed. The two hundred forty-five passages were classified under two main headings, "Concerning Man's Hesed", "and Concerning God's Hesed".

Next the principles underlying the three translations were emphasized as contributing evidence toward a correct translation.

Following that were given the opinions of several scholars who have contributed to this subject, which helped to form a basis for the concluding statement as to the most adequate translation of hesed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The hesed of man as studied in Chapter I grows out of a relationship which inspired the individual to help him who is in need. Man shows hesed to his neighbor, not because of a sense of duty, but because of a bond of love. This same bond carries over into associations with relatives, as is seen in the story of Ruth. There is a hesed relationship between host and guest as was exemplified in the story of the spies and Rahab. (Joshua 2). The covenant relationship of Johathan and David resulted in the fact that each faithfully showed hesed to the other. Isaiah 40:6 does not refer primarily to a moral quality in regard to man's hesed, but to his physical appearance. This is a rare exception. The hasid is one who exemplifies hesed. He is recognized as a godly one, a saint. Hesed is not often used to show man's faithfulness to God, however Jeremiah 2:2 and Hosea 6:4, 6 do have this connotation. The elements of man's hesed are: "faithfulness", "duty", "love", "devotion", "intercession", and "kindness".

Chapter II dealt with the hesed of God with the aim of showing concretely what the hesed of God implies. It is never left in the abstract, but always involves the illustration of an act. It binds a relationship as does a covenant. His hesed protects His own from enemies and troubles, and preserves their life from death. It makes possible man's redemption from sin, and quickens his spiritual life. God's hesed is abundant in supply, great in extent, and everlasting as it works toward man's salvation.

Chapter III was a study in comparisons, for which five Hebrew words and four Greek words formed the basis. Scriptural illustrations were

cited, which showed that four of the Hebrew words (emet, berit, sedeq, and rahamin) have a similar meaning to hesed. On the other hand, hen, which is used only four times with hesed, lacks the essential quality found in hesed, namely the idea of a tie or claim. Of the New Testament words, three (eleos, charis, oiktirmos) were used by Septuagint translators to represent hesed. The remaining one, agape, though not used in translating hesed is perhaps the best New Testament expression of the hesed relationship.

In Chapter IV the aim was to give the earliest translations (Septuagint) of hesed, followed in parallel columns by the translations of the A.V. and A.R.V. The two hundred forty-five passages were classified and listed according to those which refer to man's hesed and those referring to God's hesed. From these many various translations were drawn some principles which very definitely contributed evidence toward a correct translation. This was followed by the opinions of several scholars who have contributed to this subject.

The conclusion resulting from this study is based upon the evidence furnished from concrete Scriptural illustrations; from the comparison of Old and New Testament words similar in meaning to hesed; from the principles underlying the various translation; and from the opinions of scholars. Hesed, when referring to man, is best translated "kindness". This does not exclude the other elements such as "faithfulness", "dutiful love", and "devotion" which are often applied to hesed, but is concluded to be the best English translation, one which is comprehensive enough to express any and all hesed relationships of men.

The hesed of God is most adequately translated "lovingkindness".

This conclusion is based on evidence reached in the same manner as that in determining the translation of man's hesed. God's hesed reveals an act of kindness growing out of a spirit of love, resulting from a hesed covenant between God and His chosen ones. It signifies God's love as revealed in acts of kindness.

APPENDIX

VARIATION IN THE VERSE NUMBERS

IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

AS COMPARED TO THOSE IN THE HEBREW TEXT

APPENDIX

VARIATIONS IN THE VERSE NUMBERS IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION AS COMPARED TO THOSE IN THE HEBREW TEXT

HEBREW	ENGLISH
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GENESIS

32:11	32:10
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PSALM

5:8	5:7
6:5	6:4
13:6	13:5
21:8	21:7
31:8	31:7
31:17	31:16
31:22	31:21
36:6	36:5
36:8	36:7
36:11	36:10
40:11	40:10
40:12	40:11
42:9	42:8
44:27	44:26
48:10	48:9
51:3	51:1
52:3	52:1
52:10	52:8
57:4	57:3
57:11	57:10

HEBREW

ENGLISH

PSALM

59:11	59:10
59:17	59:16
59:18	59:17
61:8	61:7
62:13	62:12
63:4	63:3
69:14	69:13
69:17	69:16
77:9	77:8
85:8	85:7
85:11	85:10
88:12	88:11
89:2	89:1
89:3	89:2
89:15	89:14
89:25	89:24
89:29	89:28
89:34	89:33
89:50	89:49
92:3	92:2
108:5	108:4

Jeremiah

9:23	9:24
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Hosea

12:7	12:6
2:21	2:19

HEBREW

ENGLISH

JONAH

2:9

2:8

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