

RESEARCH ON “GENERATION” (for Linda)

The word “generation” in the Old Testament (Hebrew) is defined as:

Title: Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

H1755

דֹרֹר דֹרֹר

do□r do□r

dore, dore

From [H1752](#); properly a *revolution* of time, that is, an *age* or generation; also a *dwelling*:—age, X evermore, generation, [n-]ever, posterity.

This word is found in Isaiah’s famous prophecy about the Messiah

Isa 53:7 - Isa 53:8 (NASB)

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He did not open His mouth;

Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,

So He did not open His mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away;

And as for His **generation**, who considered

That He was cut off out of the land of the living

For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?

This same passage is quoted in the New Testament in Greek. It is the Scripture that the eunuch was reading when he met Philip on the road to Gaza.

Acts 8:32 - Acts 8:33 (NASB)

³² Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

“He was led as a sheep to slaughter;

And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,

So He does not open His mouth.

³³ “In humiliation His judgment was taken away;

Who will relate His **generation**?

For His life is removed from the earth.”

The Greek word used would carry the same definition as the Hebrew word. It is defined in Strong’s as:

Title: Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

G1074

γενε□

genea

ghen-eh-ah’

From (a presumed derivative of) [G1085](#); a *generation*; by implication an *age* (the period or the persons):—age, generation, nation, time.

It is derived from the Greek word for “people” – “genos” (I can’t believe I actually remembered that from my Greek classes in seminary. The Lord must really want you to be at peace with this.)

Title: Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

G1085

γ□νος

genos

ghen'-os

From [G1096](#); “kin” (abstractly or concretely, literally or figuratively, individually or collectively):—born, country (-man), diversity, generation, kind (-red), nation, offspring, stock.

As you can see from the definitions in both Hebrew and Greek, in addition to its usage for the single 20-year generation of a family, this word is also used very broadly to refer to an age, a nation, an epoch of time, and a group of people who share familial characteristics or heritage ("stock"). The meaning assigned to the word has to be taken from the context.

When Jesus used the word, He seemed to use it almost exclusively to refer to the Jews of His day and all who came after them who have the opportunity to welcome Him as Messiah but have rejected Him. Here's the teachings that give me this impression.

Matt 11:16 - Matt 11:19 (NASB)

¹⁶“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other *children*, ¹⁷and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ ¹⁹“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

Matt 12:39 - Matt 12:45 (NASB)

³⁹But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; ⁴⁰for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹“The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²“The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

⁴³“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. ⁴⁴“Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵“Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

Matt 23:34 - Matt 23:39 (NASB) (This teaching especially seems to relate the generation to the entire period until the Second Coming)

³⁴“Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵so that upon you may fall *the guilt* of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶“Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸“Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹“For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Matt 24:29 - Matt 24:35 (NASB)

²⁹“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. ³¹“And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

³²“Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; ³³So, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, *right* at the door.

³⁴“Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

Mark 8:11 - Mark 8:12 (NASB) ¹²Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said*, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

Mark 8:37 - Mark 8:38 (NASB) ³⁸“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Mark 9:18 - Mark 9:19 (NASB) (This one implies the generation will continue even after He is gone) ¹⁹And He answered* them and said*, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!”

Luke 17:24 - Luke 17:26 (NASB) ²⁴“For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. ²⁵“But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

Here's some of the other apostles' teachings:

Acts 2:38 - Acts 2:40 (NASB) ³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹“For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”

Eph 3:4 - Eph 3:7 (NASB) ⁴By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

Phil 2:14 - Phil 2:16 (NASB) ¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

There are, of course, a handful of references to specific generations such as the number of generations between Adam and Jesus, the generation of Israelites that wandered in the desert for 40 years, etc., but you can tell from the context that it means a specific familial generation. In the preponderance of the New Testament Scripture (shown above), the context shows that the meaning assigned to the word should be very much broader.