

A Word Study by Pastor Melissa Scott, Ph.D.

Word Study on “Works”

New Testament use of “works” (source: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance heading “works” from Matthew to Colossians)

In Matthew’s Gospel:

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

καλὰ ἔργα (noun, accusative) read verses 13 – 16 context: the *outraying* of Christ in you

Matthew 7:22 “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”

δυνάμεις (noun, accusative) πολλάς → not *erga*

Matthew 11:2 “Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples...”

ἔργα (noun, accusative) τοῦ Χριστοῦ (“works of Christ” genitive case)

Matthew 11:20 “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not...”

πλεῖσται δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

Matthew 11:21 “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you...”

δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

Matthew 11:23 “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee...”

δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

Matthew 13:54 “And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?”

δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

Matthew 13:58 “And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”

δυνάμεις (noun, accusative)

Matthew 14:2 “And therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.”

δυνάμεις (noun, nominative) ἐνεργουῖσιν

Matthew 16:27 “And then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

κατὰ τὴν *πράξιν (noun, accusative) αὐτοῦ

*(The title of the book of Acts in Greek reads “The πράξιν of the Apostles”)

Matthew 23:3 “But do not ye after their works....”

ἔργα (noun, accusative) αὐτῶν μὴ

Matthew 23:5 “But all of their works they do for to be seen of men...”

ἔργα (noun, accusative)

12 occurrences in Matthew, however 7 times *dunameis*, 4 times *erga* and 1 time *praxin*.

Word Study on “Works”

In Mark’s Gospel:

Mark 6:2 “And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished...that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?”
δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

Mark 6:14 “That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.”
δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

2 occurrences in Mark – both times *dunameis*

In Luke’s Gospel:

Luke 10:13 “For if the mighty works had been done...”
δυνάμεις (noun, nominative)

Luke 19:37 “The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.”
δυνάμεων (noun, genitive)

2 occurrences in Luke – both times *duna* derivatives

In John’s Gospel:

John 5:20 “And he will shew him greater works than these...”
ἔργα (noun, accusative)

John 5:36 “For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do...”
ἔργα (noun, nominative)

John 6:28 “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?”
εργαζώμεθα τὰ ἔργα (noun, accusative) (genitive →) τοῦ θεοῦ

John 7:3 “Go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.”
ἔργα (noun, accusative)

John 7:7 “That the works thereof are evil.”
ἔργα (noun, nominative)

John 8:39 “The works of Abraham.”
ἔργα (noun, accusative)

John 9:3 “Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”
τὰ ἔργα (noun, nominative) τοῦ θεοῦ

John 9:4 “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day.”
(verb →) εργαζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα (← noun, accusative)

John 10:25 “The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.”
ἔργα (noun, nominative)

Word Study on “Works”

1

2

John 10:32 “Jesus answered them, Many good works haved I shewed you from my Father; for which one of those works do ye stone me?”

1) ἔργα καλὰ (noun, accusative) 2) ἔργα (noun, accusative)

John 10:37 “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.”

ἔργα τοῦ (noun, accusative) πατρός μου

John 10:38 “Believe the works...”

ἔργοις (noun, dative)

John 14:10 “I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”

ἔργα (noun, accusative)

John 14:12 “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also...” (KJV reads twice; in the Greek text once)

ἔργα (noun, accusative)

John 15:24 “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did...”

ἔργα (noun, accusative)

17 occurrences in John are all *erga* and its derivatives

In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the English word “works” is used, however in the Greek:

11 times *dunameis* – cognate: dynamite 21 times *erga* – cognate: energy 1 *praxin* – cognate: practice

- Most of these are nouns in the accusative or nominative.
- Greek nouns function the same as English – Person, Place, Thing (and sometimes/ideas).
- In English we determine the subject by its placement, generally – before the verb.
- In Greek we can determine what function the noun plays by inflection or “declension.”

Cases:

- Accusative: If a word is the direct object of the verb it will be in the accusative.
- Nominative: This case usually indicates the subject of the sentence.
- Dative: This case usually indicates the indirect object.
- Genitive: Case of possession, source.

Word Study on “Works”

Acts 2:11 “We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”
μεγαλεια του θεου (The Greek word here is *megaleia*; it is not *erga*, *dunamis* or *praxis*.)

Acts 7:41 “And rejoiced in the works of their own hands.”
εργois (noun, dative)

Acts 9:36 “This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds...”
εργων αγαθων (noun, genitive)

Acts 15:18 (*omit*) *does not read the same in the Greek text as KJV.*

Acts 26:20 “And do works meet for repentance.” (Doing works “worthy” of repentance.)
εργα (noun, accusative)

Romans 3:27 “By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.” εργων (noun, genitive)

Romans 4:2 “For if Abraham were justified by works...” εργων (noun, genitive)

Romans 4:6 “Righteousness without works...” εργων (noun, genitive)

Romans 9:11* “Not of works...” (*This is verse 12 in the Greek manuscript) εργων (noun, genitive)

Romans 9:32 “The works of the law.” εργων (noun, genitive)

Romans 11:6 “And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” εργων (noun, genitive)

Romans 13:3 “Good works...” εργω (noun, dative)

Romans 13:12 “Cast off the works of darkness...” εργα (noun, accusative)

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 “For Satan himself is transformed [literally *He transforms himself*] into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [literally *deacons*] also be transformed [*transform themselves*] as the ministers of righteousness [*deacons of dike (δικε)*] whose end shall be according to their works.” εργα (noun, accusative)

Galatians 2:16 “By the works of the law...” – 3 times in the verse εργων νομου (All 3 times – noun, genitive)

Galatians 3:2, 3:5, 3:10 “The works of the law...” εργων νομου (All 3 times – noun, genitive)

Galatians 5:19 “The works of the flesh...” εργα της σαρκος (noun, nominative)

Ephesians 2:9 “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” εργων (noun, genitive)

Ephesians 2:10 “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works...” εργοις αγαθοις (noun, dative)

Ephesians 5:11 “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...” εργοις (noun, dative)

Colossians 1:21 “In your mind by wicked works...” εργοις (noun, dative)

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	Noun Genitive	Noun Dative	Noun Nominative	Noun Accusative
1 Timothy	2:10	5:10, 6:18	5:25	
2 Timothy				1:9, 3:17, 4:14
Titus	2:7, 2:14, 3:5, 3:8, 3:14			1:16
Hebrews	4:3, 4:4, 4:10, 6:1, 9:14, 10:24		1:10, 2:7	3:9
James	2:20, 2:21, 2:22 (second “works” in the verse), 2:24, 2:25, 2:26	2:22 (first “works” in the verse)		2:14, 2:17, 2:18 (twice), 3:13
1 Peter	2:12			
2 Peter			3:10	
1 John			3:12	3:8

Revelation: (the seven churches of Asia – 2:2, 2:5, *2:9, *2:13, 2:19 (twice), 2:23, 2:26, 3:1, 3:2, 3:8, 3:15), 9:20, 14:13, 15:3, 18:6, 20:12, 20:13 *Not in Greek MSS

John 6:28-29 “Then said they unto him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of God?
 Jesus answered and said unto them

This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

