

What Will We Do With The Greek Term *Mello*?

LEXICONS

In New Testament Greek for Beginners by J. Gresham Machen, *mello* is said to mean "**about to.**"

In A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with Their Precise Meanings for English Readers by W. E. Vine, he defined *mello* as "**to be about to.**"

In Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament by A. T. Robertson, he described *mello* as meaning "**to be on the point of....**"

In The Analytical Greek Lexicon of the New Testament by George V. Wigram, he said that *mello* means "**to be about to, be on the point of.**"

In The Interlinear Literal Translation of The Greek New Testament by George R. Berry, *mello* is defined as "**to be about to do, to be on the point of....**"

In A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Joseph H. Thayer, wrote that *mello*'s primary meaning is "1. **to be about to**" and "2. **to be on the point of....**"

In A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament by Fritz Reinecker, he quoted from A Greek Grammar of the New Testament by F. Blass and A. Debrunner in which it says that *mello* means "**to be about to, used with the inf. to express imminence.**"

In The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia it reads, "**mello, referring to what is about to be, i.e. on the point of occurring or immediately impending.**"

INTERLINEARS

Obviously due to the fact that the primary meaning of *mello* is clearly "to be about to be," Greek linguists translate this term in this manner nearly (if not) every time. Observe:

Out of the 110 times *mello* is found in George Berry's Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament, it's translated "about to" 92 times.

Out of the 108 times *mello* is found in Westcott/Hort, it's translated "about to" ALL 108 times.

Out of the 109 times *mello* is found in Word Study: Greek-English New Testament (aka McReynold's Interlinear) it's translated "about to" ALL 109 times. So, statistically speaking...

These Greek scholars translated *mello* as "about to" **95%** of the time.

A HELPFUL CHART

(Definitions by G. R. Berry. Side-Note: e = epsilon; ē = eta; o = omicron; ō = omega.) [] = Some Manuscripts.

e or ē- mellen	about to (Lk 7:2, 9:31, 10:1, 19:4, Jn 4:47, 6:6, 6:71, 11:51, 12:33, 18:32, Ax 12:6, 16:27, 27:33, & Hb 11:8)
e or ē- mellon	about to (Jn 7:39, Ax 21:27, & Rv 10:4)
mellē	about to (Mk 13:4, Lk 21:7, & Rv 10:7)
mellei	about to (Mt 2:13, 16:27, 17:12, 17:22, Lk 9:44, 19:11, Jn 7:35a & 7:35b, Ax 17:31, 23:3, 26:23, Rm 4:24, Rv 1:19, 2:10b, 3:2, Rv 12:5, & 17:8)
mellein	about to (Ax 11:28, 19:27, [23:30], 24:15, 25:4, 27:10, & 28:6)
melleis	about to (Jn 14:22, Ax 22:26, & Rv 2:10a) [no] delay (Ax 22:16)
mellēsete	about to (Mt 24:6)
mellete	about to (Ax 5:35 & Rm 8:13)
mellō	about to (Mt 20:22 & Rv 3:16)
mellomen	about to (1 Th 3:4)
mellon	hereafter (Lk 13:9) future (1 Tm 6:19)

mellōn	about to (Mt 11:14, Lk 22:23, 24:21, Jn 12:4, Ax 20:7, 20:13b, 21:37, 26:2, Hb 8:5)
mellonta	about to (Mk 10:32, Lk 21:36, Ax 13:34, & 23:27) to be (Rm 8:38) coming (1 Cr 3:22)
mellontas	about to (Ax 3:3, 23:15 & Hb 1:14)
mellontes	about to (Ax 20:13a, 22:29, 23:20, 27:2, Js 2:12, & Rv 6:11)
mellonti	about to (Ax 20:3) coming (Mt 12:32 & Ep 1:21)
mellontōn	about to (Ax 26:22, 27:30, 1 Tm 1:16, 2 Pt 2:6, & Rv 8:13) to come (Cl 2:17) coming (Hb 9:11], 10:1, & 11:20)
mellontos	about to (Ax 18:14, 24:25, 2 Tm 4:1, & Hb 10:27) coming (Rm 5:14) to come (Hb 6:5)
mellousan	about to (Rm 8:18 & Gl 3:23) to come (Hb 2:5) coming (Hb 13:14)
mellousēs	about to (1 Pt 5:1, Rv 3:10, & 12:4) coming (Mt 3:7, Lk 3:7, & 1 Tm 4:8)
mellousin	about to (Jn 6:15 & Ax 20:38)

Incidentally, searching seven interlinears, I found it interesting that...

~ five of them concurred on the imminency found in the phrase "about to" in Romans 8:18;

~ six of them concurred to the same in Acts 17:31, 24:15, 25, 26:22, Rev. 1:19, 6:11, & 17:8; and...

~ **all** of them concurred to the same in Mat. 16:27, Luke 21:36, Acts 26:22, 2 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 1:14, Heb. 10:27, & 1 Pet. 5:1.

A RELEVANT HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

Eusebius, a Christian historian of the AD 200s, recorded this about James, the Lord's brother, when he was on trial: James "answered with a loud voice, 'Why do ye ask me respecting Jesus the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens, on the right hand of great Power, and is **about to** come on the clouds of heaven'" (Ecclesiastical History, 2:23:13, p. 60, emp. mine).

CONCLUSION

So, is this all just coincidence? Is all this something we can afford to ignore when it comes to how we interpret God's Word and how it applies to us today? The ball is now in your court. What will you do?

{Tony E. Denton, June 2008.}

End Notes: Textual variants exist in the following passages: Acts 23:30, Hebrews 9:11, & 2 Peter 1:12.

Where the Received Text (upon which the NKJV is based) has *mellein* ("about to") in Acts 23:30, the Critical Text (upon which the NASB is based) has nothing.

Where the Received Text has *mellontōn* in Hebrews 9:11, the Critical Text has *genomenōn* from the root *ginomai*, concerning which Thayer said means "to become" as in "to come into existence." (As the NIV footnotes, the difference is that while the Critical Text indicates something past, the Received Text indicates something future.) And...

Where the Received Text has *amelēsō* in 2 Peter 1:12, the Critical Text has *mellēsō*. Although they may appear to be related terms (*mellō* vs. *melō*), Thayer said concerning *amelēsō* that it means "to be care-less of, to neglect" (*melō* meaning "to care"), while concerning *mellēsō*, Jamison, Fausset, and Brown wrote that "The oldest manuscripts read, 'I will be about always to put you in remembrance'; likewise, Robertson said of *mello* in this verse that it means, "to be on the point of doing."

Later in Dec. I discovered that some places where the KJV has "hereafter" is, according to my PC Study Bible program, linked to *mello* as well: cf. John 13:7, Rev. 4:1, & 9:12.