
MELLO: THINGS WERE “ABOUT TO” HAPPEN

By Kenneth N Higgs

The New Testament (NT) tells us about many events which were “about to” happen during the lives of Jesus and his disciples; things which were imminent and expected to occur within a short time. In order to convey this meaning, the original NT manuscripts use the Greek word “μέλλω” (mello), which means: “I intend to, I am about to”. So, whenever something was “about to” happen, the Greek NT would say “mello” this or that.

For example, when Jesus prophesied his coming crucifixion, he told his disciples that the Son of Man “is about to” [Gk: “μέλλει” (mellei)] suffer at the hands of certain men (Matthew 17:12).

Later, in Galilee, Jesus repeated that prophecy, saying that the Son of Man “is about to” [Gk: “μέλλει” (mellei)] be delivered into the hands of men (Matthew 17:22).

NB: “mellei” is a form of the word “mello”.

1. USE OF “MELLO” TO WARN OF IMMINENT ACTIONS OR EVENTS.

That Greek word “mello” appears 110 times in various forms in the NT. Here are more examples:

MATTHEW’S GOSPEL

Matt. 2:13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to (Gk: μέλλει = “is about to”) search for the child, to destroy him.”

Matt. 20:22 Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am (Gk: μέλλω = “I am about to”) to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.”

MARK’S GOSPEL

Mark 10:32 And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was (Gk: μέλλοντα = “about to”) to happen to him

LUKE’S GOSPEL

Luke 7:2 Now a centurion had a servant¹ who was sick and at the point of death (Gk: ἤμελλεν = “was about to”), who was highly valued by him.

Luke 9:31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to (Gk: ἤμελλεν = “was about to”) accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luke 9:44 “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to (Gk: μέλλει = “is about to”) be delivered into the hands of men.”

Luke 10:1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to (Gk: ἤμελλεν = “was about to”) go.

Luke 19:4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to (Gk: ἤμελλεν = “was about to”) pass that way.

Luke 22:23 And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to (Gk: μέλλων = “was about to”) do this.

JOHN’S GOSPEL

John 4:47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death (Gk: ἤμελλεν = “was about to”).

We can clearly see from the passages above that certain events were “ABOUT TO” happen... IMMEDIATELY or very SOON after.

- **Matthew 2:** King Herod soon searched for the infant Jesus, just as predicted.
- **Matthew 20, Mark 10, Luke 9:** the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus did occur within a short time, just as predicted.
- **Luke 19:** Jesus did in fact pass the sycamore tree, soon after Zacchaeus climbed up to see him, just as predicted.

“Mello” means that something is IMMINENT and “ABOUT TO HAPPEN”. It never means “MANY YEARS FROM NOW” or “SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE” or “2000 YEARS FROM NOW”! Yet that is what some Bible translators want us to believe, whenever “mello” is used in a passage about the parousia (Second Coming) of Christ.

2. USE OF “MELLO” IN PAROUSIA PASSAGES

Let us now examine several Bible passages about the parousia of Christ, where the word “mello” is used, thereby implying that the parousia was IMMINENT and “ABOUT TO HAPPEN”. Here are some examples:

THE ONE ABOUT TO COME

Matthew 16:27 the Son of Man is ~~going to~~ⁱ (Gk: μέλλει = “is about to”) come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Rom. 5:14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one ~~who was to~~ⁱ (Gk: μέλλοντος = “who is about to”) come.

THE AGE (OR WORLD) ABOUT TO COME

Matthew 12:32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to (Gk: μέλλοντι = “about to”) come.

Ephesians 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to (Gk: μέλλοντι = “about to”) come.

1 Timothy 6:19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the ~~future~~ⁱ (Gk: μέλλον = “(time) about to be”), so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Hebrews 2:5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to (Gk: μέλλουσαν = “which is about to”) come, of which we are speaking.

Hebrews 6:5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to (Gk: μέλλοντος = “which is about to”) come.

Hebrews 13:14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to (Gk: μέλλουσαν = “about to”) comeⁱ.

THE GLORY ABOUT TO BE REVEALED

Romans 8:18,38 YLTⁱⁱ 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory about to (Gk: μέλλουσαν = “about to”) be revealed in us; ... 38 for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor messengers, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things about to be (Gk: μέλλοντα = “about to (be)”)

1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is ~~going to~~ⁱ (Gk: μελλούσης = “which is about to”) be revealed.

THE WRATH (OR JUDGEMENT) ABOUT TO COME

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to (Gk: **μελλούσης** = "which is about to") come?"

Luke 3:7 He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath (Gk: **μελλούσης** = "which is about to") come?"

Acts 17:31 because he has fixed a day on which he ~~will~~ⁱ (Gk: **μέλλει** = "is about to") judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

2 Timothy 4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is (Gk: **μέλλοντος** = "is about to") to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

WHEN WILL ALL THESE THINGS HAPPEN?

Mark 13:4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to (Gk: **μελλή** = "are about to") be accomplished?"

Luke 21:7 And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to (Gk: **μελλή** = "are about to") take place?"

Luke 21:36 But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that ~~are going~~ⁱ (Gk: **μέλλοντα** = "are about to") to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Acts 26:22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said ~~would~~ⁱ (Gk: **μελλόντων** = "was about to") come to pass.

Colossians 2:17 These are a shadow of the things to ~~come~~ⁱ (Gk: **μελλόντων** = "about to (be)"), but the substance belongs to Christ.

Clearly the authors of the New Testament were warning early Christians (pre-AD 70) about the imminent parousia and judgement coming upon their world. That is why the authors used the word "mello", which indicates that these events were "ABOUT TO" happen... very SOON... in their lifetime.

3. USE OF “MELLO” IN THE APOCALYPSE ... BOOK OF REVELATION

Another important use of the word “mello” is in the Apocalypse (ie: Book of Revelation). Just as in the passages above, the author of Revelation also talks about the parousia (Second Coming) of Christ. The angel revealed to Apostle John that the parousia was “ABOUT TO” happen... it would be SOON. Young’s Literal Translation (YLT) ⁱⁱ of the New Testament renders the relevant passages correctly.

Here are some examples of the use of “mello” in Revelation, from YLT:

Revelation 1:19 YLT Write the things that thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to (Gk: μέλλει = “is (are) about to” ⁱⁱⁱ) come after these things;

Revelation 2:10 YLT Be not afraid of the things that thou art about to (Gk: μέλλεις = “are about to”) suffer; lo, the devil is about to (Gk: μέλλει = “is about to”) cast of you to prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days; become thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of the life.

Revelation 3:10,16 YLT Because thou didst keep the word of my endurance, I also will keep thee from the hour of the trial that is about to (Gk: μελλούσης = “which is about to”) come upon all the world ^{iv}, to try those dwelling upon the earth ^v ... So -- because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to (Gk: μέλλω = “I am about to”) vomit thee out of my mouth.

Revelation 6:11 YLT and there was given to each one white robes, and it was said to them that they may rest themselves yet a little time, till may be fulfilled also their fellow-servants and their brethren, who are about to (Gk: μέλλοντες = “are about to”) be killed -- even as they.

Revelation 8:13 YLT And I saw, and I heard one messenger, flying in the mid-heaven, saying with a great voice, 'Wo, wo, wo, to those dwelling upon the land from the rest of the voices of the trumpet of the three messengers who are about to (Gk: μελλόντων = “are about to”) sound.'

Revelation 12:5 YLT and she brought forth a male child, who is about to (Gk: μέλλει = “is about to”) rule all the nations with a rod of iron, and caught away was her child unto God and His throne.

What would be the point of telling Christians in the 1st Century about apocalyptic events, if those things were not expected for thousands of years... after they were all dead and their world had disappeared? How could those events have any meaning or significance to 1st Century people, if they would NOT live to see and experience them? It just doesn't make any sense.

Conversely, if those early Christians were “ABOUT TO” experience great tribulations and persecutions, they would obviously find encouragement and hope in the knowledge that “SOON” their Lord Jesus Christ was “ABOUT TO” return and rescue them from their enemies... the last wicked and perverse generation of Old Covenant Jews and their temporary Roman allies.

The obvious meaning of the Greek word “mello” throughout the New Testament is that certain things were “ABOUT TO” happen... SOON... in a very short time. And when it refers to the parousia (Second Coming) of Christ, the word “mello” was clearly intended to warn people that it was “ABOUT TO” happen, in the lifetime of those early Christians. This is exactly what Jesus promised his disciples:

"27 For, the Son of Man is about to (Gk: μέλλει = "is about to") come in the glory of his Father, with his messengers, and then he will reward each, according to his work. 28 Verily I say to you, there are certain of those standing here who shall not taste of death till they may see the Son of Man coming in his reign." (Matthew 16:27-28 YLT)

For more information about the timing of the parousia, please read my article: "**Time Statements**".

You can access it online or download a PDF copy from: ParousiaFulfilled.com

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ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Many Bible translators evade the IMMINENCE meaning of the Greek word "μέλλω" (mello) in parousia passages, by twisting and misinterpreting it to indicate some vague, undefined future timing. That is irresponsible and fallacious interpretation, in this author's view.

ⁱⁱ The Young's Literal Translation (YLT) was translated by Robert Young, who believed in a strictly literal translation of God's word. This version of the Bible is in the public domain.

ⁱⁱⁱ Example of the Greek grammar rule: a Neuter Plural Subject takes a Singular Verb.

^{iv} "world" in Revelation 3:10 is a form of the Greek word "οἰκουμένη" (oikoumene), which refers to the inhabited world of the Roman Empire. It is NOT talking about planet Earth!

^v "earth" in Revelation 3:10 is a form of the Greek word "γῆ" (ge), which refers to the land or territory of Judea and the Roman Empire. It is NOT talking about planet Earth!