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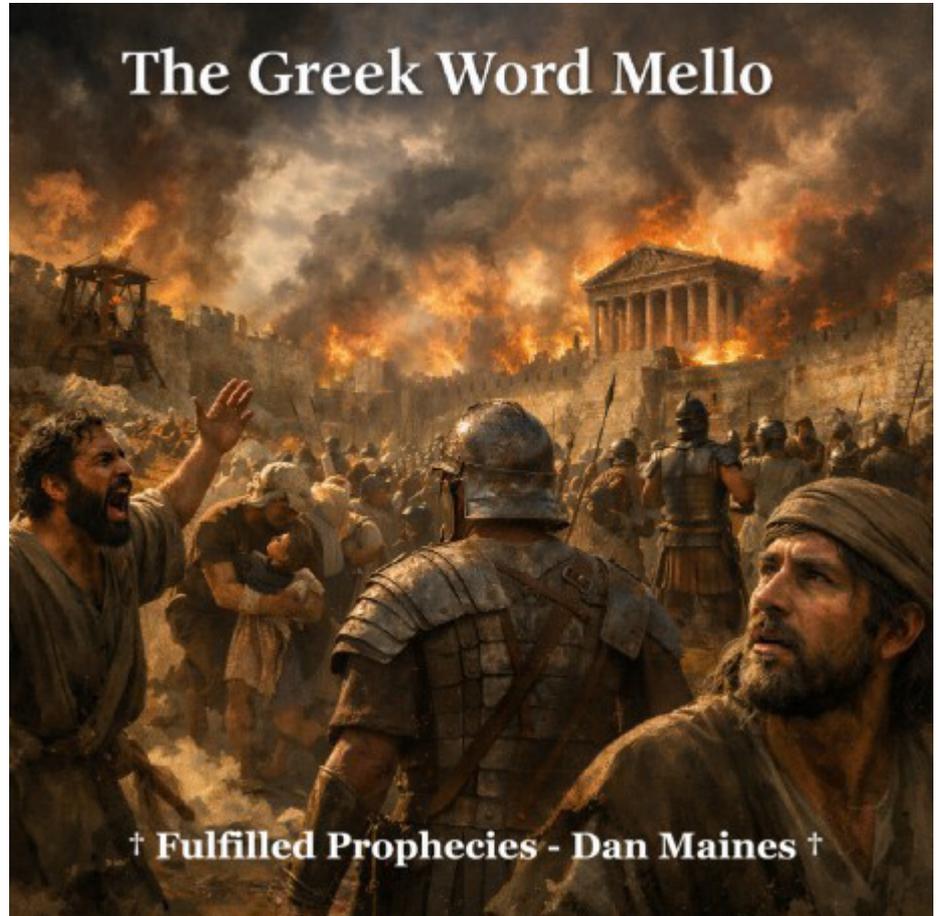
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## Mello - The Greek Word Mello



By Dan Maines

## The Greek Word Mello

### Introduction

† A lot of confusion in modern teaching comes from timing words being softened, ignored, or treated like they mean someday.

† The New Testament writers were not vague about expectation. They repeatedly spoke of events that were near in their own generation.

† One Greek word that exposes this clearly is the word mello.

† The Greek word mello is used many times in the New Testament and is rarely taught in today's traditional church.

† For those hearing this for the first time, the Greek word mello means imminent, about to be, about to happen.

† Knowing the true meaning of this word may bring a very different outcome to what many people believe about prophecy.

† The KJV translates Strong's G3195 in the following manner: shall (25x), should (20x), would (9x), to come (9x), will (7x), things to come (4x), not translated (3x), miscellaneous (33x).

† Strong's definition of mello is a strengthened form of G3199 meaning to intend, to be about to be, to be on the point of doing something.

† If people understood how this word functions in context, many long held religious traditions would collapse under the weight of the text itself.

### **Matthew 3:7**

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the **wrath to come** ?

† John the Baptist was warning his own generation about a coming judgment that was approaching them.

† The phrase wrath to come carries the sense of judgment that was approaching quickly in their covenant world.

† The surrounding verses speak of the axe already laid at the root of the tree, showing that the judgment was not distant but standing at the door.

### **Matthew 16:27-28**

For the Son of Man **is going to come** in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

"Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

† Jesus tied the coming of the Son of man directly to the lifetime of some who were standing there listening to Him.

† This passage alone destroys the idea of a coming thousands of years later because Jesus placed the timing within that living audience.

† When mello is understood in passages like this, the sense of imminence becomes undeniable.

### **Matthew 17:22-23**

And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man **is going to be handed over** to men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." And they were deeply grieved.

† Everyone understands that this prophecy happened soon after Jesus spoke it.

† No one reads this as meaning thousands of years later because the context shows it was about to happen.

† This is how the word mello functions throughout the New Testament when describing events that were near.

### **Acts 17:31**

because He has set a day on which He **will judge** the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead."

† The Greek text here uses the word mello in connection with judgment.

† The meaning is that judgment was about to take place within their historical setting.

† Paul was warning his listeners about the approaching covenant judgment that Jesus had already foretold.

## **Acts 24:15**

having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall **certainly be a resurrection** of both the righteous and the wicked.

† Paul spoke of a resurrection hope connected with the unfolding transition of that generation.

† The resurrection language of the New Testament is tied to the defeat of death in Christ and the end of the old covenant order.

† When the timing language of the apostles is allowed to speak plainly, the resurrection expectation becomes part of that first century fulfillment.

## **Acts 24:25**

But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the **judgment to come**, Felix became frightened and responded, "Go away for now, and when I have an opportunity, I will summon you."

† Felix trembled because the message of judgment was presented as a real and pressing reality.

† The apostles preached judgment as something approaching their world, not a vague future thousands of years away.

† This fits perfectly with the warnings Jesus gave about judgment coming upon that generation.

## **Ephesians 1:21**

far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the **one to come** .

† Paul spoke of two covenant worlds, the one they were living in and the one that was about to arrive.

† The apostles lived in the transition between the fading old covenant age and the establishment of the new covenant kingdom.

† Understanding that transition explains why the New Testament repeatedly uses urgent language about what was about to happen.

## **2 Timothy 4:1**

I solemnly exhort you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who **is to judge** the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

† Paul charged Timothy with urgency because judgment and kingdom authority were realities connected with that unfolding transition.

† The apostles did not preach an endlessly postponed judgment but one connected to Christ's covenant vindication.

† Jesus had already declared that all those things would come upon that generation.

## Hebrews 10:27

but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH **WILL CONSUME** THE ADVERSARIES.

† The book of Hebrews repeatedly warns its readers that the old covenant system was about to disappear.

† The fiery judgment language fits the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the end of that covenant order.

† The audience of Hebrews was standing on the edge of that historical turning point.

## Hebrews 10:37

FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,  
HE WHO **IS COMING** WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

† The writer of Hebrews directly told his audience that the coming was in a very little while.

† This confirms the consistent New Testament message that fulfillment was near in their generation.

† Statements like this reinforce the meaning carried by the word mello throughout the apostolic writings.

## Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which **must soon take place** ; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

† The opening verse of Revelation declares that the events of the prophecy would shortly come to pass.

† This establishes the same timing expectation seen throughout the New Testament.

† The prophecy was written to real churches facing events that were approaching their time.

## **Revelation 1:19**

Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which **will take place** after these things.

† Revelation was written to real churches facing real pressures in the first century.

† The instruction to write what was about to happen shows that the prophecy concerned events approaching their time.

† The book must be read within the same first century setting to which it was originally given.

† Understanding the Greek word *mello* helps remove the confusion created by centuries of tradition.

† When the timing words of Scripture are allowed to speak for themselves, the message becomes clear and consistent.

† This is why every believer should study these words carefully like the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily.

## **Historical References**

† Josephus recorded the famine, internal civil war, and destruction that fell upon Jerusalem during the Roman siege.

† Tacitus also recorded the Roman war in Judea and confirmed the devastation that came upon the city and temple.

† Eusebius recorded that the Christians in Jerusalem fled the city before the Roman destruction after remembering the warnings of Jesus.

† Epiphanius preserved the early Christian tradition that

believers escaped Jerusalem before the war broke out.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote about the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of the Lord's warnings to that generation.

† Lactantius also recorded that Jerusalem's fall fulfilled the judgments spoken by Christ.

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† Understanding the timing language of Scripture protects us from fear driven end time speculation.

† It shows that Jesus and the apostles spoke truthfully about events that were approaching their generation.

† It frees believers from religious systems that keep people waiting for things Christ already accomplished.

† It encourages believers to study Scripture carefully and test tradition against the actual text of the Bible.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q** What does the Greek word mello mean?

**A** It means to be about to, to be on the point of doing something, or something that is about to happen.

**Q** Why is this word important in prophecy?

**A** Because it often shows that events were near to the audience being addressed, not thousands of years away.

**Q** Why is it rarely taught today?

**A** Because if the timing language of Scripture is taken seriously, many modern end time teachings collapse.

**Q** What should believers do about this?

**A** Study the Scriptures carefully, examine the original words, and follow the example of the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily.

**Q** Why would Bible translators not translate mello as about to every time?

**A** Translators often choose a smoother English reading instead of a strict literal rendering. Words like shall, will, or to come are easier in English, but they can weaken the sense of immediacy that the Greek word mello sometimes carries.

**Q** Does mello always mean immediate fulfillment?

**A** Not always. Like many Greek words, context determines its strength. However, when mello appears together with clear time statements such as this generation, shortly, near, or a very little while, it strongly reinforces the idea that the event **was** approaching.

**Q** How does mello affect the understanding of Jesus' coming?

**A** When passages containing mello are read together with Jesus' time statements, the coming of the Son of man is seen as a judgment event connected with that generation rather than a distant event thousands of years later. (Matthew 16:27-28)

**Q** Why did the apostles preach with such urgency?

**A** The apostles believed they were living in the final days of the old covenant age. Their preaching reflects urgency because they understood the fulfillment of prophecy was approaching in their lifetime. (Hebrews 10:37)

**Q** Did the early Christians expect these things soon?

**A** Yes. Early Christians lived with the expectation that the warnings of Jesus about Jerusalem would come to pass. Historical writers such as Eusebius recorded that believers even fled the city before the Roman destruction.

**Q** How does understanding mello help interpret Revelation?

**A** Revelation opens by stating that the events in the book must shortly come to pass. Understanding mello and similar timing language helps readers recognize that the prophecy was written to first century churches facing events that were approaching

their time. (Revelation 1:1)

**Q** Why is studying the original Greek important?

**A** Studying the original language helps believers see how certain words carry meaning that may not always appear clearly in translation. It encourages careful study of Scripture rather than relying only on tradition.

**Q** What should believers do when they discover something like this?

**A** The proper response is the same example given in the book of Acts, believers should search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so. (Acts 17:11)

**Q** Does understanding mello weaken faith in Scripture?

**A** No. It strengthens faith because it shows that Jesus and the apostles spoke truthfully about events that occurred exactly when they said they would.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Matthew 3:7; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 17:22-23; Acts 17:31; Acts 24:15; Acts 24:25; Ephesians 1:21; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:27; Hebrews 10:37; Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:19

† Josephus; Tacitus; Eusebius; Epiphanius; Clement of Alexandria; Lactantius

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