

The Biblical Timetable of The Return of Jesus

(the Greek word “mello”)

The topic of our Bible Study today is *“The Biblical Timetable of the Return of Jesus”*. The Bible is actually very clear in its teachings about the timing of the Return of Jesus. Our study today will focus on a Greek word that is very often overlooked. This Greek word **“mello”** will bring even greater clarity to the Biblical timetable of the Return of Jesus.

This Greek word **“mello”** appears 110 times in the New Testament. The Vines Expository Dictionary defines the primary use of the word **“mello”** as:

“to be about to be or to be about to occur, or to be about to do”.
(p. 1038)

The Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines “mello” as “to be about to do anything” and “to be on the point of doing or suffering something”. (p. 396)

In most translations, the Greek word **“mello”** [Strongs G#3195](#) is translated as **“shall”** most of the time. The English word **“shall”** simply implies a future action with no indication of the timing of this future event; whereas the Greek word **“mello”** emphasizes the inherent imminency of this action. Now we will begin to cite some Scriptural examples where the Greek word **“mello”** is used.

In **Luke 7:2**, we read about the centurion’s servant who was ready **“mello”** to die.

Luk 7:2 And^{G1161} a certain^{G5100} centurion's^{G1543} servant,^{G1401} who^{G3739} was^{G2258} dear^{G1784} unto him,^{G846} was sick,^{G2192 G2560} and ready^{G3195} to die.^{G5053}

G3195

μέλλω

mellō

mel'-lo

A strengthened form of **G3199** (through the idea of *expectation*); to *intend*, that is, *be about* to be, do, or suffer something (of persons or things, especially events; in the sense of *purpose, duty, necessity, probability, possibility, or hesitation*): - about, after that, be (almost), (that which is, things, + which was for) **to come**, intend, was to (be), mean, mind, **be at the point**, (be) ready, + return, shall (begin), (which, that) should (after, afterwards, hereafter) tarry, which was for, will, would, be yet.

He was actually at the point of death. His death was imminent, and this is why the Greek word **“mello”** is used in this passage.

John 4:47, we read about a certain nobleman whose son was at the point **“mello”** of death.

Joh 4:47 When he^{G3778} heard^{G191} that^{G3754} Jesus^{G2424} was come^{G2240} out of^{G1537} Judaea^{G2449} into^{G1519} Galilee,^{G1056} he went^{G565} unto^{G4314} him,^{G846} and^{G2532} besought^{G2065} him^{G846} that^{G2443} he would come down,^{G2597} and^{G2532} heal^{G2390} his^{G846} son:^{G5207} for^{G1063} **he was at the point of death.**^{G3195 G599}

Again, the use of **“mello”** here stresses the nearness of the death of his son.

In **John 6:15**, we see the word **“mello”** used to indicate that the people who saw the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000, were about to **“mello”** come and make him a King.

Joh 6:15 When Jesus^{G2424} therefore^{G3767} perceived^{G1097} that^{G3754} **they would**^{G3195} come^{G2064} and^{G2532} take him by force,^{G726} ^{G846} to^{G2443} make^{G4160} him^{G846} a king,^{G935} he departed^{G402} again^{G3825} into^{G1519} a mountain^{G3735} himself^{G846} alone.^{G3441}

In **Acts 3:3**, we read that Peter and John were about to **“mello”** go into the temple.

Act 3:3 Who^{G3739} seeing^{G1492} Peter^{G4074} and^{G2532} John^{G2491} **about**^{G3195} to go^{G1524} into^{G1519} the^{G3588} temple^{G2411} asked^{G2065} an ^(G2983) alms.^{G1654}

Acts 18:14 tells us that Paul was now about to **“mello”** open his mouth to speak at the judgment seat of Gallio.

Act 18:14 And^{G1161} when Paul^{G3972} **was now about**^{G3195} to open^{G455} *his* mouth,^{G4750} Gallio^{G1058} said^{G2036} unto^{G4314} the^{G3588} Jews,^{G2453} If^{G1487} it^(G3303 G3767) were^{G2258} a^(G5100) matter of wrong^{G92} or^{G2228} wicked^{G4190} lewdness,^{G4467} O^{G5599} ye Jews,^{G2453} reason^{G3056} would that I should bear with^{G430 G302} you:^{G5216}

In **Acts 20:3**, we read about how Paul was about to **“mello”** to sail into Syria.

Act 20:3 And^{G5037} *there* abode^{G4160} three^{G5140} months.^{G3376} And when^(G5259) the^{G3588} Jews^{G2453} laid wait for^{G1917 G1096} him,^{G846} **as he was about**^{G3195} to sail^{G321} into^{G1519} Syria,^{G4947} he purposed^{G1096 G1106} to return^{G5290} through^{G1223} Macedonia.^{G3109}

Acts 21:27 speaks of the seven days of purification were almost (“mello”) ended when Jews stirred up all the people against Paul.

Act 21:27 And^{G1161} when^{G5613} the^{G3588} seven^{G2033} days^{G2250} were almost^{G3195} ended,^{G4931} the^{G3588} Jews^{G2453} which were of^{G575} Asia,^{G773} when they saw^{G2300} him^{G846} in^{G1722} the^{G3588} temple,^{G2411} stirred up^{G4797} all^{G3956} the^{G3588} people,^{G3793} and^{G2532} laid^{G1911} hands^{G5495} on^{G1909} him,^{G846}

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In **Acts 27:33**, we see another similar usage of “mello”; “While the day was coming....” (“mello”)

Act 27:33 And^{G1161} while^{G891} the day^{G2250} was^{G3195} coming on,^{G1096} Paul^{G3972} besought^{G3870} them all^{G537} to take^{G3335} meat,^{G5160} saying,^{G3004} This day^{G4594} is the fourteenth^{G5065} day^{G2250} that ye have tarried^{G4328} and continued^{G1300} fasting,^{G777} having taken^{G4355} nothing.^{G3367}

In **Matthew 2:13**, we see very specific and immediate instructions given to Mary and Joseph, “... **Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.....for Herod will seek (“mello”) the young child to destroy him”**.”

Mat 2:13 And^{G1161} when they^{G846} were departed,^{G402} behold,^{G2400} the angel^{G32} of the Lord^{G2962} appeareth^{G5316} to Joseph^{G2501} in^{G2596} a dream,^{G3677} saying,^{G3004} Arise,^{G1453} and take^{G3880} the^{G3588} young child^{G3813} and^{G2532} his^{G846} mother,^{G3384} and^{G2532} flee^{G5343} into^{G1519} Egypt,^{G125} and^{G2532} be^{G2468} thou there^{G1563} until^{G2193(G302)} I bring thee word:^{G2036} ^{G4671} for^{G1063} Herod^{G2264} will^{G3195} seek^{G2212} the^{G3588} young child^{G3813} to destroy^{G622} him.^{G846}

In **Luke 10:1** we find Jesus sending the disciples out two by two into every city where He himself would come (“mello”) shortly.

Luk 10:1 After^{G3326} these things^{G5023} the^{G3588} Lord^{G2962} appointed^{G322} other^{G2087} seventy^{G1440} also,^{G2532} and^{G2532} sent^{G649} them^{G846} two and two^{G303} ^{G1417} before^{G4253} his^{G848} face^{G4383} into^{G1519} every^{G3956} city^{G4172} and^{G2532} place,^{G5117} whither^{G3757} he himself^{G846} would^{G3195} come.^{G2064}

In **John 6:5-6**, we see Jesus setting the stage for His miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. He questioned **Philip “...to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.” (“mello”)**

Joh 6:6 And^{G1161} this^{G5124} he said^{G3004} to prove^{G3985} him:^{G846} for^{G1063} he^{G846} himself knew^{G1492} what^{G5101} he would^{G3195} do.^{G4160}

“Mello” was used in this passage to indicate that shortly Jesus was going to feed the 5,000.

In **Luke 19:4**, we see Zacchaeus climbing up into the sycamore tree to see Jesus because he knew that he was to pass that way (**“mello”**) shortly.

Luk 19:4 And^{G2532} he ran^{G4390} before,^{G1715} and climbed up^{G305} into^{G1909} a sycamore tree^{G4809} to^{G2443} see^{G1492} him:^{G846} for^{G3754} he was^{G3195} to pass^{G1330} that^{G1565} way.

In **Matthew 20:22**, we see Jesus at the Last Supper saying, **“... are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall (‘mello’) drink of....”**

Mat 20:22 But^{G1161} Jesus^{G2424} answered^{G611} and said,^{G2036} Ye know^{G1492} not^{G3756} what^{G5101} ye ask.^{G154} Are ye able^{G1410} to drink^{G4095} of the^{G3588} cup^{G4221} that^{G3739} I^{G1473} shall^{G3195} drink^{G4095} of, and^{G2532} to be baptized^{G907} with the^{G3588} baptism^{G908} that^{G3739} I^{G1473} am baptized^{G907} with? They say^{G3004} unto him,^{G846} We are able.^{G1410}

The word **“mello”** was used here because His crucifixion was imminent, it was very near.

In **Acts 16:27**, we read about the keeper of the prison when he noticed the prison doors open, **“... he drew out his sword and would have killed (‘mello’) himself supposing that the prisoners had been fled.”** He was very close to killing himself when Paul’s voice stopped him.

Act 16:27 And^{G1161} the^{G3588} keeper of the prison^{G1200} awaking out of his sleep,^{G1096} and^{G1853} seeing^{G1492} the^{G3588} prison^{G5438} doors^{G2374} open,^{G455} he drew out^{G4685} his sword,^{G3162} and would^{G3195} have killed^{G337} himself,^{G1438}

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There are many more Scriptural examples very similar to the ones cited where the Greek word **“mello”** is used over and over again to denote something that was about to take place or the nearness of an event.

The examples that we have already cited have proven this meaning. This same Greek word **“mello”** is also used in several Scriptures that reference the coming judgment, the resurrection and the return of Jesus Christ. Let’s look at some of these references.

Our first two references are seen at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse in **Mark. 13:4** and in **Luke 21:7**.

Mar 13:4 Tell^{G2036} us,^{G2254} when^{G4219} shall these things^{G5023} be?^{G2071} and^{G2532} what^{G5101} shall be the^{G3588} sign^{G4592} when^{G3752} all^{G3956} these things^{G5023} shall^{G3195} be fulfilled?^{G4931}

Luk 21:7 And^{G1161} they asked^{G1905} him,^{G846} saying,^{G3004} Master,^{G1320} but when^{G4219} shall^{G3767} these things^{G5023} be?^{G2071} and^{G2532} what^{G5101} sign^{G4592} will there be when^{G3752} these things^{G5023} shall^{G3195} come to pass?^{G1096}

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In both of these references, the disciples were asking Jesus what shall be the sign when all these things shall (“**mello**”) be fulfilled.

This is very important because the use of the word “**mello**” in these verses proves that when all of the signs were present, the coming of Jesus to judge the wicked, to resurrect the dead, and to reward the righteous was imminent.

As a matter of fact, **that very generation** who were asking Jesus this question that day, Jesus proclaimed that they would still be alive to see this. **(Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32)**

In **Luke 21:36**, Jesus stressed the imminency of His coming once again when He said “... *that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall (“**mello**”) come to pass...*” The use of “**mello**” here by Jesus stresses that the time was very short.

Luk 21:36 Watch^{G69} ye therefore,^{G3767} and pray^{G1189} always,^{G1722} ^{G3956} ^{G2540} that^{G2443} ye may be accounted worthy^{G2661} to escape^{G1628} all^{G3956} these things^{G5023} that shall^{G3195} come to pass,^{G1096} and^{G2532} to stand^{G2476} before^{G1715} the^{G3588} Son^{G5207} of man.^{G444}

Jesus makes a strong time statement in **Matthew 16:27-28**. “*For the Son of man shall (“**mello**”) come in the glory of his Father.... he shall reward every man according to his works....*”

Then He clearly states, “... *there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*”

Mat 16:27 For^{G1063} the^{G3588} Son^{G5207} of man^{G444} shall^{G3195} come^{G2064} in^{G1722} the^{G3588} glory^{G1391} of his^{G848} Father^{G3962} with^{G3326} his^{G848} angels;^{G32} and^{G2532} then^{G5119} he shall reward^{G591} every man^{G1538} according^{G2596} to his^{G848} works.^{G4234}
Mat 16:28 Verily^{G281} I say^{G3004} unto you,^{G5213} There be^{G1526} some^{G5100} standing^{G2476} here,^{G5602} which^{G3748} shall not^{G3361} taste^{G1089} of death,^{G2288} till^{G2193} G302 they see^{G1492} the^{G3588} Son^{G5207} of man^{G444} coming^{G2064} in^{G1722} his^{G848} kingdom.^{G932}

This is a clear reference to what many Christians call “**the second coming**” or “**the rapture**”. This use of the Greek word “**mello**” further substantiates a first century return.

The word “**mello**” used here still means “**something that is about to happen**”. Jesus said it Himself that some of them would actually see this happen.

Another powerful statement of imminence is found in **Hebrews 13:14**. “**For we have no continuing city, but we seek one (“mello”) to come.**”

Heb 13:14 For^{G1063} here^{G5602} have^{G2192} we no^{G3756} continuing^{G3306} city,^{G4172} but^{G235} we seek^{G1934} one to come.^{G3195}

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Their “**continuing city**”, their New Jerusalem was about to come. (“**mello**”) It was very near. In **Revelation 1:19**, we see the glorified Jesus telling John to write the things which he was seeing and to write the things “**which shall (“mello”) be hereafter**”.

Rev 1:19 Write^{G1125} the things which^{G3739} thou hast seen,^{G1492} and^{G2532} the things which^{G3739} are,^{G1526} and^{G2532} the things which^{G3739} shall^{G3195} be^{G1096} hereafter.^{G3326 G5023}

This means that everything recorded in the Book of Revelation were things that were **SHORTLY (“mello”)** going to happen.

In **Acts 24:15**, Paul proclaimed to Felix, “... **that there shall be (“mello”) a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.**”

Act 24:15 And have^{G2192} hope^{G1680} toward^{G1519} God,^{G2316} which^{G3739} they^{G3778} themselves^{G846} also^{G2532} allow,^{G4327} that there shall^{G3195} be^{G1510} a resurrection^{G386} of the dead,^{G3498} both^{G5037} of the just^{G1342} and^{G2532} unjust.^{G94}

The use of the word “**mello**” strongly stresses the nearness of the resurrection. The strong imminency and urgency of Paul’s statements even frightened Felix. (**Acts. 24:25**)

Another statement of Paul about this urgency can be found in **2 Timothy 4:1**. “... *who shall (“mello”) judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*”

2Ti 4:1 I^{G1473} charge^{G1263} thee therefore^{G3767} before^{G1799} God,^{G2316} and^{G2532} the^{G3588} Lord^{G2962} Jesus^{G2424} Christ,^{G5547} who shall^{G3195} judge^{G2919} the quick^{G2198} and^{G2532} the dead^{G3498} at^{G2596} his^{G848} appearing^{G2015} and^{G2532} his^{G848} kingdom;^{G932}

The use of “**mello**” here clearly indicates that the judgment, the resurrection, his coming, and the arrival of His Kingdom (the New Covenant) are all about to take place.

The word “**mello**” is also used in **Hebrews 2:5** and in **6:5** denoting the nearness of the “**world to come**”.

Heb 2:5 For^{G1063} unto the angels^{G32} hath he not^{G3756} put in subjection^{G5293} the^{G3588} world^{G3625} to come,^{G3195} whereof^{G4012} we speak.^{G2980}

Heb 6:5 And^{G2532} have tasted^{G1089} the good^{G2570} word^{G4487} of God,^{G2316} and^{G5037} the powers^{G1411} of the world^{G165} to come,^{G3195}

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The coming of the Kingdom of God was imminent; it was very near.

(“**mello**”) In **Acts 17:31**, we read again how Paul stated that the judgment of God was near; He was about to judge. (“**mello**”)

Act 17:31 Because^{G1360} he hath appointed^{G2476} a day,^{G2250} in^{G1722} the which^{G3739} he will^{G3195} judge^{G2919} the^{G3588} world^{G3625} in^{G1722} righteousness^{G1343} by^{G1722} that man^{G435} whom^{G3739} he hath ordained;^{G3724} whereof he hath given^{G3930} assurance^{G4102} unto all^{G3956} men, in that he hath raised^{G450} him^{G846} from^{G1537} the dead.^{G3498}

Jesus states again in **Revelation 3:10** the imminency of the coming tribulation. Here Jesus says “... *I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall (“mello”) come upon all the world...*” (*their world*)

Rev 3:10 Because^{G3754} thou hast kept^{G5083} the^{G3588} word^{G3056} of my^{G3450} patience,^{G5281} I also^{G2504} will keep^{G5083} thee^{G4571} from^{G1537} the^{G3588} hour^{G5610} of temptation,^{G3986} which shall^{G3195} come^{G2064} upon^{G1909} all^{G3650} the^{G3588} world,^{G3625} to try^{G3985} them^{G3588} that dwell^{G2730} upon^{G1909} the^{G3588} earth.^{G1093}

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G3625

οἰκουμένη

oikoumenē

oy-kou-men'-ay

Feminine participle present passive of G3611 (as noun, by implication of G1093); *land*, that is, the (terrene part of the) *globe*; specifically the *Roman empire*: - earth, world.

G1093

γῆ

gē

ghay

Contracted from a primary word; *soil*; by extension a *region*, or the solid part or the whole of the *terrene* globe (including the occupants in each application): - country, earth (-ly), ground, land, world.

Another reference to the nearness of the **“world to come”**; **Ephesians 1:21**, **“.... not only in this world, but also in that which is (“mello”) to come.”**

Eph 1:21 Far above^{G5231} all^{G3956} principality,^{G746} and^{G2532} power,^{G1849} and^{G2532} might,^{G1411} and^{G2532} dominion,^{G2963} and^{G2532} every^{G3956} name^{G3686} that is named,^{G3687} not^{G3756} only^{G3440} in^{G1722} this^{G5129} world,^{G165} but^{G235} also^{G2532} in^{G1722} that which is to come.^{G3195}

Conclusion

The use of the Greek word **“mello”** indicates something is **“about to be”** or **“about to occur”**. This use of **“mello”** can be undeniably seen in many Scriptures that we cited in the first section of our study.

However, when it comes to passages of scriptures that use the word **“mello”** in reference to the return of Jesus and other end time events, many Christians become reluctant to apply this same urgent time frame that the word **“mello”** demands.

This is because most Christians have been taught and believe that these events have been postponed for some reason and are way off in our distant future.

To believe that Jesus has not returned yet to accomplish everything He said He would, is to completely ignore the clear Biblical timetable.

To project His Return into our future is to completely ignore the Greek word **“mello”** as it is used in all of the Scriptures. The imminency stated by the Scripture which is even more accentuated by the use of the Greek word **“mello”** completely obliterates a 2,000-year delay in His coming.

Not only can we see Jesus and the Apostles teaching about the imminence of these **“end time”** events, but the Greek use of the word **“mello”** is another undeniable proof that Jesus did return which brought an end to the Old Covenant and ushered in the New Covenant.

The Scriptures involving this word, **“mello”** and the coming of Jesus Christ imply the imminency of His coming and therefore further substantiate a first century return.

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