

# Eschatological Word Studies

## Three Greek Words For The Return

By [Harold Watkins](#)

Let us be clear in our minds what is meant when we speak of the *coming* of Christ. As in English so in Greek, a variety of words are used when speaking of the coming of some thing or some one. A study of the word *come* with its various forms in a good concordance reveals that it is used hundreds of times in the New Testament. It is also clear that it is used to translate over 50 different Greek words. Jesus and His followers employed these same, ordinary words when speaking of His eschatological coming. Out of the numerous Greek words at their disposal, they most frequently chose **parousia**, **heko**, and **erchomai** when discussing His coming.

### Parousia

Parousia [par-oo-see'-ah] is consistently translated in the New Testament by the English word *coming*. Its basic meaning, though, involves more than the simple act of *arriving* since its central meaning is *to be near*. It has the idea of *presence* as opposed to *absence*. That being true, there are some scholars who believe the word should be consistently translated as *presence* with *coming* being a secondary meaning. Of course, there must be a *coming* in order for there to be a *presence* so rendering the word as *coming* is acceptable.

Parousia is a noun and is found 24 times in the New Testament. In each of its 24 uses, it is always accompanied by the definite article *the*. It never has the indefinite article *a*. *The parousia*, therefore, appears to refer to one specific event rather than to one of several events. This means that Jesus and the New Testament writers designate His coming to be present as *the* coming and not just *a* coming, one coming as opposed to several comings. The definite article appears to negate the possibility of multiple comings. As far as they are concerned, there is only one future coming, not two or three.

Listed below are all the references in the New Testament in which the word *parousia* is found. In quoting these verses, I am retaining the use of the word *parousia* instead of its translation, and I am including before it the definite article *the*, even though sometimes to do so does not always make for good reading. A very informative exercise when reading these statements is to substitute the words *arrival* and/or *presence* in each place where *parousia* is located. Such an undertaking tends to give greater insight into what is being said.

The *parousia* is found seven times in the New Testament referring to the drawing near, the arrival, and the presence of a person other than Christ:

#### Uses of Parousia for Someone Other than Christ

I Cor. 16:17     “I rejoice over *the parousia* of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus...”

2 Cor. 7:6       “God...comforted us by *the parousia* of Titus.”

2 Cor. 7:7	“...and not only by <i>the parousia</i> of [Titus] but also by the comfort you had given him.”
2 Cor. 10:10	“It is said that [Paul’s] letters are weighty and strong, but <i>the parousia</i> of his body is unimpressive ...”
Philippians 1:25-26	“I [Paul] know that I shall live [and not die] and continue [to be] with you ... so that your rejoicing in me may be abundant in Christ Jesus through <i>the parousia</i> of me again with you.”
Philippians 2:12	“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in <i>the parousia</i> of me, but more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”
2 Thess. 2:9	“... <i>the parousia</i> [of the wicked one] is in accordance with the activity of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders...”

The parousia is also found 17 times in the New Testament in reference to the coming, the drawing near, and the presence of Christ.

<b>Uses of Parousia for Christ in the New Testament</b>	
Matthew 24:3	“[The disciples said] ‘tell us when these things will be and what [will be] the sign of <i>the parousia</i> of you and of the end of the age.’”
Matthew 24:27	“For as the lightning comes forth from [the] East and shines unto [the] west, so shall be <i>the parousia</i> of the Son of man.”
Matthew 24:37	“For as [those who lived in] the days of Noah [were unaware the time the flood would come], so will be <i>the parousia</i> of the Son of man.”
Matthew 24:39	“[Those who lived in the days of Noah] knew not until the flood came and took [them] all, so also will be <i>the parousia</i> of the Son of man.”
I Cor. 15:23	“...each one [will be resurrected] in his own order: Christ, the first [of the harvest]; after that, they who belong to Christ [will be resurrected] in <i>the parousia</i> of him.”
I Thess. 2:19	“Who is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you before our Lord Jesus in <i>the parousia</i> of him?”
I Thessa. 3:13	“[May love] establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father in <i>the parousia</i> of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”
I Thess. 4:15	“For this we say to you ... that we living ones [who are] remaining to <i>the parousia</i> of the Lord by no means may precede the having slept ones.”

I Thess. 5:23	“[May your] entire spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame in <i>the parousia</i> of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
2 Thess. 2:1	“Now we request you, brothers, with regard to <i>the parousia</i> of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him...”
2 Thess. 2:8	“The Lord will destroy [the lawless one] by the spirit of His mouth and bring [him] to nothing by the outshining of <i>the parousia</i> of him.”
James 5:7	“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until <i>the parousia</i> of the Lord...”
James 5:8	“... <i>the parousia</i> of the Lord is at hand.”
2 Peter 1:16	“...we made known to you the power and <i>the parousia</i> of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
2 Peter 3:3-4	“...there will come during the last of the days mockers mocking ...saying, ‘Where is the promise of <i>the parousia</i> of him...?’ ”
2 Peter 3:12	“[You are to be] awaiting and hastening <i>the parousia</i> of God’s day ...”
I John 2:28	“...abide in Him in order that we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame in <i>the parousia</i> of him.”

## Heko

Heko [hay'-ko] is a verb that is used to refer to *the act of coming*. It is found 25 times in the New Testament and is quite consistently translated *come* as can be seen in the following citations:

<b>Uses of Heko in the New Testament</b>	
Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:29	“I say to you that many will come from the east and the west ...”
Matthew 23:36	“I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.”
Matthew 24:14	“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”
Matthew 24:50; Luke 12:46	“The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him...”
Mark 8:3	“...some of them have come a long distance.”

Luke 15:27	“Your brother has come...”
Luke 19:43	“The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you ...”
John 2:4	“...Jesus replied, ‘My time has not yet come.’”
John 4:4	“When this man heard that Jesus had arrived...”
John 6:37	“All that the father gives me will come to me...”
John 8:42	“...I came from God and now am here.”
Romans 11:26	“The deliverer will come from Zion”
Hebrews 10:7; 10:9	“I have come to do your will, O God.”
Hebrews 10:37	“...in just a very little while, ‘He who is coming will come and will not delay...’.”
2 Peter 3:10	“...the day of the Lord will come like a thief.”
I John 5:20	“We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding...”
Revelation 2:25	“Only hold on to what you have until I come.”
Revelation 3:3	“But if you do not wake up, I will <b>come</b> like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”
Revelation 3:9	“I will make them <u>come</u> and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”
Revelation 15:4	“All nations will come and worship before you...”
Revelation 18:8	“...in one day her plagues will overtake her”

## Erchomai

Erchomai [er'-khom-ahee], like heko, is also a verb but is used much more profusely. It is found 632 times in the New Testament and is translated in a variety of ways, some 75-80 different ways in the NIV, with the most common being some form of the verb *come*, 450 times. It would be prohibitive to reference each of these locations at this time, but if I did so, the conclusion would be the same as that for *parousia* and *heko*.

The conclusion reached is to note that each of these words is a commonplace, ordinary, run-of-the-mill word used in the daily lives and conversations of those living in the first century. These words are not part of an exclusive vocabulary that operates solely in religious circles requiring some scholar to explain their meanings. Neither are they words solely designated to be used only in an

eschatological context. They should not, therefore, be considered difficult to understand when they are used within the context of the coming of Christ.

## A Study of “This Generation”

It should be unnecessary to expend time, energy, and space to defend what Jesus meant when He twice used the phrase *this generation* in this passage [Matthew 23:36; 24:34], but, unfortunately, it is.

### The Problem

The fact is that some insist that Jesus did not have in mind the *existing* generation of His day but some *future* generation when He said, “All these things shall come upon *this generation*” and “*this generation* will by no means pass away till all these things take place” [Matthew 23:36; 24:34 NKJV]. In the opinion of futurists, the fulfillment of “*these things*” occurs in a future generation. In fact, it has not been and is not uncommon for scholars who maintain that viewpoint to cite these verses, especially Matthew 24:34, as proof texts for predicting that the return of Jesus is on the horizon today since, it is claimed, we ourselves are living in that future generation of which He spoke.

Such a view is based primarily upon the concept that Israel became a nation again in 1948, nearly 1900 years after being dissolved and scattered by Roman armies in A.D. 70. The rebirth of Israel as a nation is seen as a marker that supposedly initiated the *last generation*. According to many current “*experts*” in prophecy, e.g. Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, it is this *last* generation to which Jesus was referring when He said *this* generation. The teaching was vigorously proclaimed in the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s that all those things that Jesus talked about in Matthew 23&24 would take place within that 40-year period from 1948-1988 including the return of Christ.

Since Jesus failed to return by 1988, as they predicted, some adjustments had to be made concerning their predictions. One adjustment was to redefine the term *this generation* to mean a longer period of time than the traditional and widely accepted 40-year period. It was proposed that a generation might be much longer, up to 80 years! This maneuver allowed them to readjust the time of Jesus’ supposed return, with any date acceptable up to 2028.

The second adjustment was to change the starting date of the *last generation* from 1948 to 1967 to coincide with the year in which Israel recaptured Jerusalem during the six-day war. Based upon this new scenario, it is suggested that Christ will return between the years 2007 and 2047, which are 40 to 80 years after 1967. So their erroneous 1988 prognostication has been stretched to the year 2047 which, in passing, will also be proved to be erroneous.

A thinking person might ask, “How do these men handle their wrong predictions?” In most cases, all the wrong predictions are simply ignored. Then, without any basis for doing so, they continue to emphatically proclaim that the coming of Jesus is imminent. Of course, it’s always imminent. Seemingly, it has not occurred to them that the reason Jesus did not return at the end of their

designated *last generation*, that is, in 1988, is due to a misunderstanding and a misapplying of what Jesus meant when He used the term *this generation*.

## The Survey

In light of the manipulative way the phrase *this generation* has been handled, it would be beneficial to take a closer look at the actual way Jesus used it. After harmonizing the gospel accounts so as to prevent duplication, I have found that Jesus used the Greek word *genea* [generation] eleven other times outside Matthew 23:36 & 24:34, and that in each case He was referring to His contemporaries and not to a future group of people. Here are the eleven other occasions when Jesus used the term. Notice in each case when using the phrase *this generation*, Jesus clearly had in mind the people with whom He associated.

*Matthew 11:16-19 [also Luke 7:31] Jesus said, "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners'."*

Unmistakably, Jesus was speaking of His own generation in this passage for He referred to John the Baptist as well as to Himself. Only one generation resisted the preaching of both John and Jesus, and that was the one in which they lived. Jesus' complaint was that nothing pleased those people in His day. They had reacted to John's simplistic and austere lifestyle with charges that he was under control of a demon. They had reacted to Jesus' socially active and people-oriented lifestyle with charges that He ate too much and He drank too much, while partying with societies' rejects. This led Him to compare His generation to spoiled, complaining children.

*Matthew 12:39-45 [also Luke 11:29-32] "[Jesus] answered, 'a wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah ... The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation',"*

Again, the existing generation was in Jesus' mind since He declared that He was greater in His generation than were Jonah and Solomon in theirs. The people of Nineveh recognized Jonah as having been sent by God and repented of their sins. The queen of Sheba recognized Solomon's godly wisdom and inquired of him. Such timely actions would bear witness against the Jews of Jesus' day at the judgment because they had failed to recognize Someone greater than Jonah and Solomon.

Instead of repenting as Nineveh did and responding to wise teaching as the queen did, they challenged Jesus to do something sensational and spectacular to prove that God had really sent Him. Their challenge of His authority and lack of response to His ministry earned from Him the epithet *a wicked and adulterous generation*. In fact, their condition would worsen to the point that the nation would resemble a man possessed by eight evil spirits. In the previous reference, Jesus compared His generation to spoiled children. Here, He characterizes their moral and spiritual state as sliding deeper and deeper into evil.

*Matthew 16:1-4 [also Mark 8:12]. Jesus said, “The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. He replied, ‘...you know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign...’ ”*

Obviously, the existing generation was again in Jesus’ mind in these comments because they were directed toward the Pharisees and the Sadducees, His contemporaries. Those people often joined with others demanding that Jesus authenticate His message with some supernatural sign. Jesus responded that they were very good at reading the sky to determine weather conditions but were oblivious to the sign that was standing right in front of them. Again, as in the previous passage, He characterized that generation of people as a wicked and adulterous one.

Incidentally, this also was the opinion of the great historian Flavius Josephus, who was not only General Titus’ personal historian but also was a Jewish priest. He wrote this in reference to his own people of that time:

“It is ... impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men’s iniquity. I shall, therefore, speak my mind here at once briefly, that neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world” [Flavius Josephus in *Wars*, Book 5, Chapter 10, Section 5].

Another example:

*Matthew 17:17 [also Luke 9:41 and Mark 9:19] Jesus said, “O unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, ‘How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?’ ”*

Here Jesus expressed a measure of exasperation with that generation of people of which He was a part. He was grieved and upset with them, including some of His disciples, due to their failure to recognize and respond positively to His message. It was painful for Him to live among such unresponsive people whom He also characterized as faithless and perverse. Their minds were twisted and degenerate, that is, turned in the wrong direction. Paul picked up on this term and used it in a similar fashion when advising the Philippians, “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in *a crooked and depraved generation*” [Philippians 2:14-15 NIV].

**Luke 11:47-51** Jesus said, “Woe to you [Pharisees] because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them... Therefore *this generation* will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world ... Yes, I tell you, *this generation* will be held responsible for it all.”

Although the subject matter of this passage is very similar to that of Matthew 23:35, it should be noted that the locations where the statements were made are different. Matthew records that Jesus’ confrontation with the Scribes and Pharisees occurred in the temple area since, he says, Jesus left the temple immediately after that altercation [Matthew 24:1]. Luke records an earlier conflict that occurred at mealtime in a Pharisee’s home [Luke 11:37]. This duplication should not be thought of as unusual for in a time when communications were primarily oral, a speaker would often repeat the same message at different locations.

Nevertheless, the existing generation of people is clearly in Jesus’ mind when He pronounced judgment upon the Pharisees. By declaring the existing generation would be held responsible for the killing of all the prophets from the beginning, Jesus again indicated how wicked that generation of people was. The number of times that Jesus characterized those people as wicked, sinful, and adulterous should grab our attention for it indicates that there was something peculiar about that generation. And such was the case.

More than one historian has characterized it as not only the *last* but also the *worst* of all the generations of Israel. Again, hear the words of Josephus, words which he wrote in about A.D. 75:

*“And here I cannot but speak my mind, and what the concern I am under dictates to me, and it is this: I suppose, that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, that the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by, for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such punishments, for by their madness it was that all the people came to be destroyed” [Flavius Josephus in Wars, Book 5, Chapter 13, Section 6].*

As a result, it inherited the guilt of all the previous generations and, in fact, deserved the judgment that was pending when Jesus spoke.

**Mark 8:34-38** “Then [Jesus] called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me...If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.’”

It was to a crowd that followed Him, including His disciples, that He spoke these words and labeled the generation in which they lived as adulterous and sinful. James, the Lord’s brother [Galatians 1:19], later characterized that same generation in similar terms, “You *adulterous people*, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God...” [James 4:4]. The Jews of that day, following in the footsteps of their ancestors, were guilty of spiritual infidelity, of being unfaithful to God, and seeking a satisfying relationship with a selfish and godless world.



*Luke 17:22-25 “Then [Jesus] said to his disciples, ‘The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, “There he is!” or “Here he is!” Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation’.”*

Here it is apparent that when Jesus spoke of *this generation*, He had in mind the one in which He lived. No other generation but His own can make the awful claim that it was their generation in which Jesus suffered and was rejected.

## Conclusions

Each of these passages indicates a pattern in the way Jesus used the term *this generation*, and virtually no one questions the fact that He was referring to His contemporaries in the situations quoted above. Such a near widespread agreement, therefore, begs the question:

If Jesus was referring to his contemporaries each time He used the phrase *this generation*, what kind of logic would lead us to believe that He had in mind an entirely different group of people when He used the same term in Matthew 23:36 & 24:34?

Every other time He used that phrase, He was referring solely and exclusively to the Jewish people of His day, and they understood Him as speaking to them or about them. Why would He suddenly change? And, if he did change, would it have been fair of Him to expect His listeners to immediately make the same mental switch?

The only plausible interpretation is that He had the same people in mind when He used the term in Matthew 23:36 & 24:34 as He did when He used it on other occasions. Every other explanation involves a twisting of language and a frustration to natural understanding. In such a case, *this* must take on the meaning of *that*. *This generation* must be twisted to denote a future generation. If Jesus wanted to refer to the existing generation, what better term could He have used than the phrase *this generation*? What other expression should He have used if *this generation* does not refer to His generation?

## Three Greek Words That Designate Time

The three significant Greek words that have been mentioned – *tachos*, *eggus*, and *mello* - are used throughout the New Testament with regards to the timing of events. It is unfortunate, then, that they are often ignored when specifically connected with *eschatological events*. All three of these words are time-indicators that communicate the concept of nearness, and I believe are of such importance that they deserve a more detailed study.

## Tachos

Tachos [tahk' os] (also spelled Tacheos) with its various forms is a word used 38 times in the New Testament. It is a word that writers used to express something that was happening or about to happen without any delay. It always referred to the nearness in time that something was to begin to occur. I have listed the verses in which this Greek word, or one of its forms, is found and the ways it has been rendered into English in three different and generally respected translations. If you study the passages outside the book of Revelation, you can determine in what sense the writers used the word. It should not be changed when one runs across it in the book of Revelation.

<b>Uses of Tachos in the New Testament</b>			
<b>Translation</b>	<b>KJV</b>	<b>NIV</b>	<b>NAS</b>
Matthew 5:25	quickly	quickly	quickly
Matthew 28:7	quickly	quickly	quickly
Mark 9:39	lightly	in the next moment	soon afterward
Luke 14:21	quickly	quickly	at once
Luke 15:22	untranslated	quick	quickly
Luke 16:6	quickly	quickly	quickly
Luke 18:8	speedily	quickly	speedily
John 11:29	quickly	quickly	quickly
John 11:31	hastily	quickly	quickly
John 13:27	quickly	quickly	quickly
John 20:4	more quickly	outran	faster
Acts 12:7	quickly	quick	quickly
Acts 17:5	with all speed	as soon as	as soon as
Acts 22:18	quickly	immediately	quickly
Acts 25:4	shortly	soon	shortly
Romans 16:20	shortly	soon	soon
1 Cor. 4:19	shortly	very soon	soon
Galatians 1:6	so soon	so quickly	so quickly
Philippians 2:19	shortly	soon	shortly
Philippians 2:24	shortly	soon	shortly
2 Thess. 2:2	soon	easily	quickly

1 Timothy 3:14	shortly	soon	before long
1 Timothy 5:22	suddenly	hasty	hastily
2 Timothy 4:9	shortly	quickly	soon
Hebrews 13:19	sooner	soon	sooner
Hebrews 13:23	shortly	soon	soon
James 1:19	be swift	be quick	be quick
2 Peter 1:14	shortly	soon	is imminent
2 Peter 2:1	swift	swift	swift
Revelation 1:1	must shortly	must soon	must shortly
Revelation 2:16	quickly	soon	quickly
Revelation 3:11	quickly	soon	quickly
Revelation 11:14	quickly	soon	quickly
Revelation 22:6	must shortly	must soon	must shortly
Revelation 22:7	quickly	soon	quickly
Revelation 22:12	quickly	soon	quickly
Revelation 22:20	quickly	soon	quickly

**Tachos** is a word used in relation to time, not in relation to a process. It does not refer to *how fast* something is done once it starts, that is, how rapidly something will proceed. But it refers to *how soon* something is to start, how quickly it is to occur. Its root meaning has the idea of swiftness, promptness, or readiness. And with regards to the timing of an event, it describes how swift or how prompt or how ready an event is to occur.

I personally disagree with the use of the English word soon as a translation of the word tachos. It just doesn't show the urgency that is inherent in tachos. It seems to leave open the possibility of some delay whereas words like quickly, shortly, and speedily seem to negate such a possibility. For example, when the angel of the Lord appeared to Peter telling him to "*get up quickly* and get out of there" [Acts 12:7], He wasn't saying, "Get up soon, whenever you get around to it" as if he had plenty of time. The urgency is just not in our word soon. I would prefer the NIV translators to use a word other than soon in the book of Revelation, at least to be consistent with the rest of the New Testament. Nevertheless, even though the word soon carries the concept of nearness, I think quickly, shortly, or speedily appear to express the essence a little better.

Those who believe in a futuristic interpretation of Revelation have a lot of difficulty with the word tachos. Since it means nearness in time, they must redefine it to mean *quickness in the process*. They insist the meaning is that *once the events of Revelation begin*, they will occur rapidly. Their predisposition to a futuristic interpretation of the book forces them to change the original meaning of tachos to one that harmonizes with their eschatological beliefs. And in doing this they are making

Jesus say something He did not say. A much better approach would be to accept what Jesus said and then determine how such came to pass instead of trying to fit what He said into one's own paradigm.

And example of this is when Israel would have been much better off in the days of Ezekiel believing that what the Lord said was what He meant. A very informative passage, found in Ezekiel 12:25-28, reveals Israel's attempt to redefine what God said and so mirrors how scholars today do the same. In Ezekiel's vision, God told him to say to Israel, "The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled," but the leaders of Israel said, "The vision [Ezekiel] sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies about the distant future." God said the days were near; Israel's leaders said He's talking about the distant future. The result was that because the people did not believe Him, God said, "Therefore...none of my words will be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be fulfilled." Within ten years Jerusalem fell and many people were taken as captives to Babylon.

How do modern scholars justify the redefinition of Jesus' own teaching in view of the above passage? It is obvious that it is based upon the inherent need of their system, the holes in their own *eschatological format*. Words used in 30-70 A.D. that indicate the soon return of Jesus must be denied, ignored, or redefined because they don't fit into their paradigm. The system must be upheld! It must not change! Like Israel of old, modern leaders teach that an event that was prophesized to occur shortly is really about the distant future. An event that was predicted to occur quickly will actually happen many years from now. An event that was said to be at hand is actually a long ways off. Sad, but true.

## Eggus

Eggus [eng-goos'] is an adverb that is used 73 times in the New Testament. I have listed the verses in which this Greek word, or one of its forms, is found and the ways it has been rendered into English in three different and generally respected translations. A study of each of these references discloses what the writers meant when they used the word. Even a quick glance at the lists clearly reveals the meaning of the word: to show that something or someone or some event was *near* or *close* in either space or time.

<b>Uses of Eggus in the New Testament</b>			
Translation	<b>KJV</b>	<b>NIV</b>	<b>NAS</b>
Matthew 3:2	is at hand	is near	is at hand
Matthew 4:17	is at hand	is near	is at hand
Matthew 10:7	is at hand	is near	is at hand
Matthew 21:1	drew nigh	approached	approached
Matthew 21:34	drew near	approached	approached
Matthew 24:32	is nigh	is near	is near
Matthew 24:33	is near	is near	is near
Matthew 26:18	is at hand	is near	is at hand

Matthew 26:45	is at hand	is near	is at hand
Matthew 26:46	is at hand	comes	is at hand
Mark 1:15	is at hand	has come	is at hand
Mark 11:1	came nigh	approached	approached
Mark 13:28	is near	is near	is near
Mark 13:29	is nigh	is near	is near
Mark 14:42	is at hand	comes	is at hand
Luke 7:12	came nigh	approached	approached
Luke 10:9	is come nigh	is near	has come near
Luke 10:11	is come nigh	is near	has come near
Luke 12:33	approacheth	comes near	comes near
Luke 15:1	drew near	were gathering	were coming near
Luke 15:25	drew nigh	came near	approached
Luke 18:35	come nigh	approached	was approaching
Luke 18:40	come near	came near	had come near
Luke 19:11	was nigh	was near	was going to appear immediately
Luke 19:29	was come nigh	approached	approached
Luke 19:37	was come nigh	came near	was now approaching
Luke 19:41	was come near	approached	approached
Luke 21:8	draweth near	is near	is at hand
Luke 21:20	is nigh	is near	is at hand
Luke 21:28	draweth nigh	is drawing near	is drawing near
Luke 21:30	nigh at hand	is near	is now near
Luke 21:31	nigh at hand	is near	is near
Luke 22:1	drew nigh	was approaching	was approaching
Luke 22:47	drew near	approached	approached
Luke 24:15	drew near	came up	approached
Luke 24:28	drew nigh	approached	approached

John 2:13	was at hand	almost time	was at hand
John 3:23	near	near	near
John 6:4	was nigh	was near	was at hand
John 6:19	drawing nigh	approaching	drawing near
John 6:23	nigh	near	near to
John 7:2	was at hand	was near	was at hand
John 11:54	near to	near	near
John 11:55	was nigh at hand	almost time	was at hand
John 19:20	was nigh to	was near	was near
John 19:42	was nigh at hand	was nearby	was nearby
Acts 1:12	untranslated	untranslated	is near
Acts 7:17	drew nigh	drew near	was approaching
Acts 9:3	came near	neared	was approaching
Acts 9:38	was nigh	was near	was near
Acts 10:9	drew nigh	were approaching	approaching
Acts 21:33	came near	came up	came up
Acts 22:6	was come nigh	came near	approaching
Acts 23:15	come near	get here	comes near
Acts 27:8	nigh	near	near
Romans 10:8	is nigh	is near	is near
Romans 13:11	nearer	is nearer	is nearer
Romans 13:12	is at hand	is almost here	is at hand
Ephesians 2:13	are made nigh	have been brought	have been brought
Ephesians 2:17	were nigh	were near	were near
Philippians 2:30	was nigh	almost	close to
Philippians 4:5	is at hand	is near	is near
Hebrews 6:8	is nigh unto	is in danger of	close to

Hebrews 7:19	draw nigh	draw near	draw near
Hebrews 8:13	is ready to	will soon	is ready to
Hebrews 10:25	approaching	approaching	drawing near
James 4:8	draw nigh	come near	draw near
James 5:8	draweth nigh	is near	is at hand
1 Peter 4:7	is at hand	is near	is at hand
Rev. 1:3	is at hand	is near	is near
Rev. 22:10	is at hand	is near	is near

As you can see, several words have been used by translators in an effort to accurately represent the meaning of *eggus*. The most literal translation is the phrase at hand because *eggus* is made up of two Greek words, *en* and *guion*, that combine to give this meaning. *En* means in, and *guion* means hand. So to say something is “in hand” implies how near it is; *it is as close as your hand*. The translations, “it is almost time”, “it is near”, “it is approaching”, and “it is close by” all express the concept of nearness and are quite acceptable.

However, it is not linguistically or theologically acceptable to redefine the meaning of *eggus* simply because it is used in an eschatological context. For a person to say something was *not near* when Jesus said it was *near* is to change Jesus’ intent. How is it possible to take events Jesus described as being at hand, and yet believe that those events did not occur even after 2000 years? It is, in effect, saying that Jesus was wrong when He said certain events were at hand. At the very least, Jesus in His wisdom could have made the timing more vague or elastic to allow some flexibility in the timing of the event. But He did not, and we must assume that He knew what He was talking about.

The Old Testament, in fact, has a number of examples of the language God used when He wanted to speak of certain events that would not occur for some time. About 1400 B.C. the prophet Balaam saw in a vision the coming of Christ. He prophesied, “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel” [Numbers 24:17]. Balaam said that He was coming but not now. He repeated that His coming was not near. This indicates that God, who gave the vision to Balaam, considered 1400 years to be a long time. An event 1400 years into the future is not an event that is at hand, yet many modern scholars apparently disagree.

After the Babylonians overran Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and took its inhabitants to Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah sent a letter informing them that the captivity would last 70 years after which God would bring them back [Jeremiah 29:10]. In the meantime they were to “...build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce” because “IT WILL BE A LONG TIME” [Jeremiah 29:28]. Here, even seventy years is said to be a long time!

If 1400 years is a long time and even if 70 years is a long time, how is it possible to believe that when Jesus said he was coming soon that He meant more than 2000 years in the future? It is quite unbelievable.

## Mello

Mello [mel' lo] with its various forms is a word used 109 times in the New Testament. It is a word the Greek writers used to express something that was about to occur, something that was *just on the horizon*. Unfortunately, our English translators have not included this meaning in most of these verses. The word is often rendered "is going to", "intends to", "will", "shall". None of these renditions, however, shows the relevant urgency inherent in the word mello, to their detriment. This urgency is far better communicated in English by the expression about to. Therefore, instead of merely listing how mello is rendered in the three translations as I have done previously, I am listing each of the references in which a form of mello is found and am including the phrase about to in the appropriate place. That a form of the word is found in each of these references can be verified by consulting any Greek New Testament. Unfortunately, I have not found 7 of the 109 times mello is used because of the nature of the translations. Mello is translated as one time, to be two times, never one time, to one time, was one time, and it is not translated one time. To find those places is like trying to find a needle in several haystacks. But enough references are listed to show how the New Testament writers used the word.

This exercise of translating the word mello as other translators should have will reveal the urgency within the New Testament writings that our translations have failed to do. I have also highlighted those verses that have bearing upon our subject.

### Uses of Mello in the New Testament

Matthew 2:13	"... Herod is about to search for the child to kill him."
Matthew 3:7	"...flee from the wrath that is about to come?"
Matthew 11:14	"...[John] is the Elijah who was about to come..."
Matthew 12:32	"...either in this age or in the age that is about to come."
Matthew 16:27	"...the Son of Man is about to come in his Father's glory."
Matthew 17:12	"...the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands."
Matthew 17:22	"The Son of Man is about to be betrayed..."
Matthew 20:22	"Can you drink the cup I am about to drink?"
Matthew 24:6	"You are about to hear of wars and rumors of wars,"
Mark 10:32	"...told them what was about to happen to him."



Mark 13:4 "...what will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled?"

Luke 3:7 "...the wrath that is about to come?"

Luke 7:2 "...a Centurion's servant...was sick and about to die."

Luke 9:31 "...which he was about to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem."

Luke 9:44 "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed..."

Luke 10:1 "...the Lord sent them...ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go."

Luke 13:9 "If it is about to bear fruit, fine..."

Luke 19:4 "...Jesus was about to pass along that way."

Luke 19:11 "...the kingdom of God was about to appear."

Luke 21:7 "...what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

Luke 21:36 "...you may be able to escape all that is about to happen..."

Luke 22:23 "...which of them it might be who was about to do this."

Luke 24:21 "...he was the one who was about to redeem Israel."

John 4:47 "...heal his son, who was about to die."

John 6:6 "...[Jesus] already had in mind what he was about to do."

John 6:15 "...they were about to come and make him king..."

John 6:71 "...Judas...was about to betray [Jesus]."

John 7:35 "Where is this man [Jesus] about to go..."

John 7:35 "Is [Jesus] about to go where our people live..."

John 7:39 "[Jesus] meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were about to receive."

John 11:51 "[Caiphais] ...prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the Jewish nation."

John 12:4 "Judas Iscariot...was about to betray him..."

John 12:33 "[Jesus] said this to signify how he was about to die."

John 14:22 "Lord, why are you about to show yourself to us..."

John 18:32 "...when he signified how he was about to die"

Acts 3:3	“When [the beggar] saw Peter and John about to enter...”
Acts 5:35	“...consider carefully what you are about to do...”
Acts 11:28	“...predicted that a severe famine was about to spread ...”
Acts 13:34	“...from the dead no more about to return to corruption...”
Acts 16:27	“[the jailer] ...was about to kill himself...”
Acts 18:14	“Just as Paul was about to speak...”
Acts 17:31	“He has set a day when he is about to judge the world...”
Acts 19:27	“Artemis...is about to be robbed of her divine majesty.”
Acts 20:3	“...just as [Paul] was about to sail to Syria...”
Acts 20:7	“Paul...was about to leave the next day...”
Acts 20:13	“... we were about to take Paul aboard...”
Acts 20:13	“...Paul who was about to go on foot to Assos.”
Acts 20:38	“...they were about to never see his face again.”
Acts 21:27	“When the seven days were about to be over...”
Acts 21:37	“...the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks...”
Acts 22:16	“And now what are you about to do?”
Acts 22:26	“What are you about to do?”
Acts 22:29	“Those who were about to question [Paul] withdrew...”
Acts 23:3	“...God is about to strike you...”
Acts 23:15	“...you are about to ascertain more information from [Paul]”
Acts 23:20	“...you are about to ascertain more information from [Paul]”
Acts 23:27	“...they were about to kill him”
Acts 24:15	“...there is about to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”
Acts 24:25	“...Paul discoursed on...the judgment that is about to come...”
Acts 26:22	“...what the prophets and Moses said was about to

	happen.”
Acts 26:23	“Christ ,, is about to proclaim light to his own people...”
Acts 27:2	“...a ship...about to sail for ports along the coast...”
Acts 27:10	“I can see our voyage is about to be disastrous...”
Acts 27:30	“...the sailors...were about to lower some anchors...”
Acts 27:33	“When it was about to be dawn, Paul urged them all to eat.”
Romans 4:24	“God is about to credit righteousness ...”
Romans 5:14	“...Adam, who was a pattern of the one about to come.”
Romans 8:18	“...the glory that is about to be revealed in us.”
Romans 8:38	“...neither the present nor the about to come...will be able to separate us from the love of God...”
Galatians 3:23	“...locked up to the faith that was about to be revealed.”
Eph. 1:19 - 21	“...not only in the present age but also in the one that is about to come.”
Colossians 2:16-17	“...are a shadow of the that are about to come...”
I Cor. 3:21-22	“...all things are yours whether...the present or the about to come...”
I Thess. 3:4	“...we kept telling you that we were about to be persecuted.”
I Timothy 1:16	“...example for those who are about to receive eternal life.”
I Timothy 4:8	“...for both the present life and the life that is about to come.”
I Timothy 6:19	“...as a firm foundation for the age that is about to come...”
2 Timothy 4:1	“...Christ, who is about to judge the living and the dead...”
Hebrews 1:14	“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who are about to inherit salvation?”
Hebrews 2:5	“It is not to angels that he has subjected the age that is about to come...”
Hebrews 6:4-5	“...the powers of the age that is about to come...”

Hebrews 8:5	“...when he was about to build the tabernacle...”
Hebrews 10:1	“...a shadow of the good things that are about to come...”
Hebrews 10:27	“...is about to consume the enemies of God.”
Hebrews 11:8	“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he was about to receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went...”
Hebrews 11:20	“Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to the about to come.”
Hebrews 13:14	“...we are looking for the city that is about to come.”
2 Peter 2:6	“...Sodom and Gomorrah...an example of what is about to happen to the ungodly.”
James 2:12	“Speak and act as those who are about to be judged...”
2 Peter 1:12	“...I am about to always remind you of these things...”
Rev. 1:19	“Write...what is about to take place”
Rev. 3:2	“...Strengthen what remains and is about to die...”
Rev. 3:16	“I am about to spit you out of my mouth”
Rev. 2:10	“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer”
Rev. 2:10	“...the devil is about to put some of you in prison...”
Rev. 3:10	“...keep you from the hour of trial that is about to come...”
Rev. 8:13	“...the trumpet blasts [that are] about to be sounded...”
Rev. 10:4	“...when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write...”
Rev. 12:4	“...in front of the woman who was about to give birth...”
Rev. 12:5	“...gave birth to a son...who is about to rule all the nations”
Rev. 10:7	“...when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet...”
Rev. 17:8	“The beast...is about to come up out of the Abyss...”

Since **mello** means *about to*, there is of necessity some delay in what is about to happen. The length of that delay is relevant to the subject under discussion. For example, when the angel told Joseph, “...Herod is about to search for the child to kill him” [Matthew 2:13], the implication being that Herod had not as yet begun his search, but that he would very soon. Therefore, Joseph should move

quickly and head for Egypt. Mello points to a future time, but in the case of Joseph, the delay is limited to minutes, not days or years. In another example, when Jesus said, "...*the Son of Man is about to come in his Father's glory...*" [Matthew 16:27], the delay is a longer period of time; in fact, some 30 years passed before He came.

It is necessary, therefore, when determining the length of a delay to harmonize with other teachings upon the subject that is being studied. With regards to "*the Son of Man who is about to come*", it is important to consider the tachos and eggus words that have already been discussed. When considered together, the three words stand against an extended delay of some 2000 years before the events to which they point are fulfilled. When taken together, a delay of 2000 years cannot be reconciled with statements, such as the following: *He is about to come, He is coming quickly, His coming is at hand*. Any stretching of these words beyond a relevant time of delay is absurd. Again, mello points to a future time, but to a near future, not to a far future. The combined words point to a 70 A.D. fulfillment because His coming is associated with the destruction of Jerusalem.

After citing 102 times where mello is used and then finding that it is used only one time in conjunction with our subject of what Jesus taught about His coming, one might raise a simple question: Why? Why go to all the time and trouble to list all the references when only one of them relates directly to our study? There are two answers:

First, I have listed all the places where mello is used in order to show that it was a common word of that day. It was used in ordinary speech, and its meaning, therefore, was understood by everyone. It was not some mystical, lofty, or majestic word that could only be understood by theologians. It was used in ordinary conversation in homes, at markets, and at work places. That means there should be no difficulty for us today in understanding what is meant wherever it is used in Scripture.

Second, I have listed all the places where mello is used in order to point out that the word is not only used in ordinary conversation but also in connection with events associated with the coming of Christ. Those events include the following:

1) The judgment upon and destruction of Jerusalem. John the Baptist asked the Jewish political and religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Who warned you to flee from the wrath that is *about to come*?" [Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7]. John also warned that One coming after him would baptize not only with the Holy Spirit but also with fire [Matthew 3:11]. There is no doubt that Jerusalem was baptized with fire in 70 A.D. When speaking of the coming judgment upon Jerusalem, Jesus said, "These be the days of vengeance" [Luke 21:22]. document upon and destruction of Jerusalem is attested to by history. As has already been pointed out in a discussion of His coming in clouds, the devastation of Jerusalem is associated with the coming of Christ.

2) The termination of the Old Covenant and the inauguration of the New. Paul told the believers in Colossae, "[Jewish religious ceremonies] are a shadow of the things that are *about to come*; the reality, however, is found in Christ" [Colossians 2:16-17]. The writer to the Hebrews stated that the New Covenant, inaugurated by Christ, made the first one obsolete, "and what is obsolete and aging will SOON disappear" [Hebrews 8:13]. The termination of the Old Covenant with all its bloody sacrifices, priestly rituals, and temple ceremonies occurred when judgment fell upon Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and is also attested to by history.

3) The resurrection of the dead and judgment of both the living and dead. It was in Paul's testimony during his trial before Felix that he commented, "...there is ABOUT TO BE a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" [Acts 24:15].