

CRUCIAL NEW TESTAMENT MISTRANSLATIONS

An Examination of Word-Study Failures

By Dr. C. Gordon Olson

Part I: An Examination of Luke's Gospel

Textual Study 3: LUKE 20: 35, 36 (cf Mark 12: 25)

Are All Resurrected Together?

Current Problematic Rendering:

³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Suggested Improved Rendering:

But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection **out from the dead ones** will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Analysis

Will there be a general resurrection of the saved and lost together? The Greek of Christ's statement in this text makes it clear that only some will attain to an out-resurrection from among the rest of the dead: **"But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die, for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection"** (Lk. 20:35-6, NIV). Since this is not a new truth, having been stated clearly in Daniel 12:2, 13, the translators should have been more careful to represent the full force of the preposition *ek* as 'out of' in this passage. We can excuse the translators of the earlier versions, but why has not one English translation clearly rendered the meaning of the original? This came to my attention in the discussion of the two resurrections by German scholar, Erich Sauer, in his classic, *The Triumph of the Crucified*.¹ He gives significant analogy of Scripture in John 5:28-29 (NIV), 1 Corinthians 15:15-24; Philippians 3:11, and Revelation 20:4-5.

This a case of failure to use the primary meaning of the preposition. Dana and Mantey gave the root meanings and resultant meanings as "*out of, from within*." Their preposition chart clearly depicts *ek* as an arrow coming out of a circle.² The BAG lexicon confirms this by giving the first meaning as: "1. to denote separation," and among four subheadings, "b. w. a group or company fr.

¹ Erich Sauer, *The Triumph of the Crucified*, trans. G. H. Lang (Eerdmans, 1955), p. 101. F. F. Bruce states that "".

² H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, pp. 102, 113.

which the separation takes place.”³ It is granted that there is considerable flexibility in the usage of Greek prepositions. In many contexts the rendering ‘from’ fits the context adequately. However, in these contexts the implications arising from the different renderings are of great significance. The primary meaning should have been preferred!

There are two other considerations in the context which demand the rendering ‘out of.’ The Lord Jesus clearly distinguished the saved as “God’s children” (20:36), who will take part in that age and the resurrection. The implication is obviously strong that others will not participate either in that coming age or in that resurrection. Also, the Gospel writers did not speak about resurrection from death (*thanatos*); they used the word *nekro#n*, referring to dead people in the plural. Thus, it could be best translated, “resurrection out from among the dead ones.”

Therefore, it becomes clear from this and other passages that there will be two resurrections, the first of “God’s children” and the second of the unsaved dead subsequently. Only Revelation 20 informs us of the time interval, one thousand years. This is, of course, the millennium, when Christ shall reign on earth. What might seem to be a minor nuance of translation, therefore, becomes a major hinge in the discussion about the millennium.

³ BAG, p. 233.