

Luke 24:46-47

A friend recently phoned me to ask if I had a solution for what appeared to be a problem in Luke 24:46-47. In the NKJV it reads like this: Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” I believe that most versions (including my own¹) have essentially the same thing. The ‘problem’ is that such a translation places the content of what Jesus said in the OT, where it is not to be found. Jesus is made to affirm a falsehood, definitely out of character, to say the least! On the spur of the moment, I had no answer for my friend, but I promised to look into it. Here is the result.

I believe it is generally agreed that a series of nouns linked by ‘and’, each having the definite article, refers to distinct entities. The baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 gives a nice example: “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”.² The normal meaning of the compound phrase is that the three entities are distinct; each one is distinct from the other two.³

I submit for due consideration that the same holds true for a series of nouns, or phrases, linked by ‘and’, when the same preposition is repeated for each one. I suggest that Galatians 6:16 offers a fair example: “peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God”. “Them” and “the Israel of God” refer to distinct groups of people.⁴

I submit for further consideration that the same adverb, overtly repeated, and linked by ‘and’, will function in a similar way; which brings me back to our ‘problem’. The Text has: ουτως γεγραπται και ουτως εδει παθειν τον Χριστον Lamentably, the eclectic text currently in vogue omits και ουτως εδει, following 0.5% of the extant Greek manuscripts, all of which are of objectively inferior quality.⁵ The 99.5% are certainly correct. In verse 44 Jesus tells the Eleven that the OT had to be fulfilled. Verse 45 has: “Then He opened their understanding so as to comprehend the Scriptures,” and verse 46 continues, “and He said to them: ‘Thus it was written. And so it was necessary for the Christ to suffer’” The ‘thus it was written’ refers back to the content of verses 44-45 and closes the topic. The second ‘thus’ opens a new topic, so the material that follows is not attributed to the OT. The ‘problem’ that our incorrect translations create is spurious.

That said, however, the eclectic text maintains and imposes the problem. Versions that follow that text will have something like this: And He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day.” Beyond question, any such rendering makes Jesus affirm a falsehood. Is that not perverse?

¹ So it is in both editions; to be corrected in the third, DV.

² Because Greek grammar has case, the preposition here is part of the definite article, in the Greek Text.

³ In passing, please note that the compound phrase is subordinate to “the name of”, ‘the name’ being singular. So here we have a presentation of the Trinity: three persons representing one ‘name’ or essence. We have it on the word of the resurrected Christ!

⁴ In the Greek Text, the preposition ‘upon’ is overtly repeated.

⁵ What objective basis did the editors have for following 7 manuscripts (of objectively inferior quality) against 1,600 better ones? None. How could they perpetrate such an atrocity? The answer may be found in Ephesians 2:2.