

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jts-os\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article]

For the present the interpreter of the New Testament will be wise not to be too confident that he may accept *εἰς* in Acts xii 25, or find purpose in *ἀσπασάμενοι* in Acts xxv 13. It is precisely Luke who alone in the New Testament shews any familiarity with the future participle in the sense of purpose.

A. T. ROBERTSON.

### THE DEATH OF JUDAS.

ACTS i 18 οὗτος (Judas Iscariot) μὲν οὖν ἐκτίησατο χωρίον ἐκ μισθοῦ τῆς ἀδικίας, καὶ πρηγῆς γενόμενος ἐλάκησεν μέσος, καὶ ἐξεχύθη πάντα τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ.

The difficulties of this passage are (i) its divergence from other accounts: this we cannot hope to remove. (ii) The asyndeton of sense—we expect καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ πρηγῆς γενόμενος. (iii) The phrase πρηγῆς γενόμενος which, if anything, should be passive—‘thrown on his face’, since one does not ‘become headlong’. (iv) The precise meaning of ἐλάκησεν μέσος. (v) The miraculous story that he should have fallen so that ‘all his bowels gushed out’—a possible effect of a sword thrust but not of a fall, or the equally miraculous story that he burst, if this be the meaning of ἐλάκησε μέσος.

To take these points in another order. (v) Papias has, in his totally different account, τὰ ἔγκατα αὐτοῦ ἐκκενωθῆναι, an *evacuatio viscerum*, common in violent deaths, whether the hanging of Matthew (xxvii 5) or the fall of Luke. (vi) ἐλάκησεν means ‘burst’ in two accounts quoted by Blass (see Milligan’s *Dictionary* s.v.). But these are possibly derivative. However, Luke may have used ἐλάκησεν μέσος = διελάκησεν, as he has elsewhere (for διεσχίσθη) ἐσχίσθη τὸ καταπέτασμα . . . μέσον—where Mark has a longer phrase. διαλακέω is good Greek for ‘burst’, but λακέω is very doubtful as such. A further passage is quoted in *lexica* for the meaning, *Georom.* xiii 15; but if the chapter be read it will be seen that it only means, apparently, ‘come to a violent end’. How, is uncertain.

Oddly enough no one appears to have noticed a use of ἐλάκησεν, whose appositeness at once leaps to the eye. In Hierocles’s *Philogelos*<sup>1</sup> the book of all others whose vocabulary most closely resembles that of the New Testament, the grumpy man (δύσκολος) in joke number 194 falls downstairs. Some one shouts ‘Who’s in there?’, and he answers ἐγὼ (ἐντὸς) τοῦ ἐνοικίου μου ἐλάκησα· τί πρὸς σέ; (so the best MS, corrected, as shewn, by Eberhard). Here the sense is clearly ‘have fallen’, or, in modern parlance, ‘have crashed’, ‘come a cropper’.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning ‘burst’ occurs in Joke 176.

It leaps at once to the eye that all difficulties but (i) can be solved if we read *καὶ μέσος γενόμενος ἐλάκησε πρηνῆς*—‘and when he arrived in the midst of it he fell headlong’—*καὶ ἐξεκενώθη τὸ σπλάγχα*. Of course we cannot call this—at least not the last four words—a probable correction: but I maintain that it is quite likely to have been very nearly what Luke found in *his source*. For all the difficulties are removed, and we have a perfectly straightforward account in Greek of the kind Luke’s authority may have used. Luke’s failure to realize the sense of the vulgarism *ἐλάκησε* thus produced his very strange account.

As to the idioms assumed (i) *γενέσθαι* of place is quite common: e. g. Lk. xxii 40 *γενόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ τόπου*; (ii) *μέσος εἶναι* of place appears in one recension of Mt. xiv 24 *τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἤδη μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης ἦν*—or the source may have had *ἐν μέσῳ*, the common idiom; (iii) *πρηνῆς ἔπεσε* (or *κατέπεσε*) is attested by a whole row of Greek writers down from Homer.

I suggest, therefore, that the transposition of *μέσος* and *πρηνῆς* in the account, whether we choose to consider the error that of Luke or of his scribes, solves at once almost all linguistic difficulties. The accident, I suppose, is considered to have taken place in a pit in Judas’s new purchase, which may, in Luke’s source, have been a potter’s field; for, as may be seen from Matthew’s account, such a field was expected to be the scene of his death.

A. D. KNOX.

Τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις  
(I THESS. iii 3).

In general the vocabulary of Paul is not markedly different from the current prose of his period, however much his style and ideas approach the Hebraistic. Nor, in any case, do I know that this remarkable phrase—*τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις*—has been explained as a Hebraism. Greek it certainly is not: for it can only be taken as a metaphor from the dog that *σαίνει* its tail or its master. No language ever used a word of tail-wagging to mean ‘perturb mentally’: and the translation ‘that none be flattered’ (*σαίνεσθαι* = *κολακεύεσθαι*), though legitimate, is wholly inappropriate. The citation of Hesychius, *σαίνεται κινεῖται, σαλεύεται, παράττεται* is of no assistance: we do not know its source, and have no right to translate it otherwise than ‘is waggled’, ‘is moved’, ‘is shaken’, ‘is stirred’. At a guess I should say that the original refers to a scudding ripple on the sea. Nor do the *variae*