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Subject: "Causal EIS," again--from Archives

Body: From: LUCY::EHOBBS "Edward Hobbs" 2-JUN-1996 12:30:52.63

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Subj: Not "causal EIS" again? Oh, no!

Dear Colleagues:

For what surely are theological reasons, the so-called "causal" meaning of EIS is revived regularly on our List. With some regularity, the classic disproof is re-cited; but since List-members come and go, the task is never over. Jeff Smelser, who calls himself a newcomer, has done us this service again. (I quote his message at the end of this posting.) I personally thank him, since it has usually fallen to me to remind everyone of the easy-to-find literature (it being mentioned in Bauer's English translations).

The history of this imaginary "causal use of EIS" is short. Julius Mantey wrote an article arguing for it in 1923 (in *The Expositor*). Four years later, in 1927, he listed it as meaning (7) for EIS in his and Dana's *Manual Grammar*, citing at great length his own article as evidence! No one was convinced except those whose theology drove them to it; so over two decades later, he read a paper at the meeting of the SBLE in Cincinnati (at Hebrew Union College), again arguing for it. I was present, as was Wilbur Gingrich, a friend of mine whose office was across the street from mine at the University of Chicago. (He was translating Bauer, for UC Press, and I was a young Instructor and a member of the Board of Examinations.) Wilbur stood up and commented that this sort of thing was "grist for our mill, as we edit Bauer for English readers." Mantey responded that a copy would certainly be sent to him. I stood up and questioned Mantey's translation of non-NT passages he had cited, but of course none of us had the texts in front of us, and it ended there.

Upon my return to Chicago, I reported this to Ralph Marcus (whom I was assisting in his preparing two volumes of Philo for the Loeb Classical Library), showing him my notes of the Mantey lecture. Marcus, one of the great linguists of our time, laughed, and dropped it. When Mantey's paper was published in JBL, I showed it to Marcus with a reminder of our conversation about it. We sat down and read the passages Mantey had cited; in every single case, Mantey failed to understand the Greek, and was palming off a mistranslation. I offered to flesh out Marcus's response, which was sent to JBL as a rejoinder. Believe it or not, when that came out, Mantey dug up some more passages, and published a second article defending this non-meaning of EIS. Marcus himself then penned another reply, exploding these claimed translations as well. That should have settled it once and for all. One obvious aspect of this exchange is that Marcus was a Jew, and had no theology of baptism one way or another!

But Mantey put on the pressure, and Gingrich decided to reference all four articles in his translation of Bauer--which may have been just as well, since it gave the references to Marcus's demolition of "causal EIS", for future readers in English to see. (German readers of the original Bauer had of course never heard of "causal EIS," for good reason!)

Mantey chose to write ME a hateful letter, in his own handwriting, denouncing me as a fool, an ignoramus, and a young whippersnapper; Marcus was far too prestigious to attack in any way. I wrote back to him, telling him how much I liked his little Manual Grammar except for this one flaw, and assured him that I had nothing but admiration for him as a person. He never replied.

As several have pointed out, this List is for discussion of the Greek language of the Bible, not for theological argument. Please, let's not sneak it in under the rubric of a fantasy-meaning of a Greek preposition.

Edward Hobbs

(who retireth not, neither doth he spin--i.e., spin fairy-tale prepositions)

Jeff Smelser wrote:

Writing in JBL in 1951, J.R. Mantey cited Mt 3:11, along with Mk 1:4 & Lk 3:3, and several other passages as examples of causal EIS. Mantey, whose denominational creed required belief in forgiveness of sins prior to baptism, hoped to explain Acts 2:38 in a manner consistent with his theology. Mantey conceded that "None of the Greek lexicons translate EIS as causal. And the only Greek grammar that does, as far as we know, is *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*" [which of course was his own, JS]

Then Mantey proceeded to seek support for causal EIS in the writings of Polybius and Josephus. Ralph Marcus responded in a subsequent issue of JBL, showing the error of the conclusion Mantey deduced from these citations. Mantey tried again, and Marcus wrote a final rejoinder, concluding with this: "If, therefore, Prof. Mantey is right in his interpretation of various NT passages on baptism and repentance and the remission of sins, he is right for reasons that are non-linguistic." JBL LXXI, p. 44.

These four articles are found in JBL LXX, pp. 45-48, pp.129-130, pp. 309-311 and LXXI pp. 43-44. They are very instructive, and, in my opinion, one who delves into the meaning of EIS would do well to read them.