

**BARNETT - SMELSER  
DISCUSSION**

**ON MARK 10:11-12**

## PREFACE

This discussion grew out of two articles I wrote that were then published in *Gospel Truths*, October/November, 2003. Brother Jeff Smelser disagreed with premises and conclusions that I presented in those articles. He wrote a response that prompted further exchanges. The material printed here explores the definition of words and grammatical construction of sentences in the verses - English, Greek and Hebrew. Though we have tried to write so as to be understood by all, such technical discussions may still be frightening to some. However, if people will read with a view to understanding, they will be successful in that effort.

The subject of this discussion, the meaning of Mark 10:11-12, is part of an continuing controversy on divorce and remarriage. It involves the meaning of “commits adultery against her” in the usual translations. Is the adultery committed “against” the put away woman or the one the man marries? In each case, just what does that mean? If it refers to the wife who was put away, does it mean she can now, somehow, “put him away” and remarry without sin? These questions are what prompted my initial two articles. However, this exchange with brother Smelser contains very little discussion of the *overall* controversy on MDR. Rather, it focuses on determining the meaning of the phrase in Mark 10:11. Once that is determined, then application can be made to the MDR controversy.

-Maurice Barnett

## **Mark 10:11-12**

**By Maurice Barnett**

***“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.”***

Though reading a little differently from other passages on this same subject, there is no contradiction between any of them. There is no “exception clause” here as we find in Matthew 5:32 or 19:9, but neither is such a clause in Luke 16:18, nor other passages on marriage and remarriage. Each of the places on the subject, Matthew 5:32, 19:9, Mark 10:11-12, Luke 16:18, Romans 7:2-3, I Corinthians 7:10-11, gives us something different. This is in the same way that Matthew 28, Mark 16 and Luke 24 on the “great commission,” though varying in details, are in complete harmony. Each gives us information not found in the others. This is true on any number of subjects and in many passages.

The controversy on Mark 10 centers on the application of the personal pronoun “her.” A personal pronoun is a word that stands *in the place of* a noun. But, who is the antecedent of the personal pronoun, “her,” in verse 11? Who is the person that “her” refers to? Does the personal pronoun apply to the wife who has been put away or the second woman the man has married? Because controversy has existed relative to the grammar and construction of these passages, it will be necessary to be technical and detailed in taking apart their structure.

***First, the antecedent of pronouns.*** There are three clauses in verse 11. The first clause says, “Whosoever shall put away his wife.” The subject of the clause is a man, though the word “man” is not stated in the text. It is understood from the gender of the pronoun “his” and the relationship indicated in the clause. The verb is “shall put away.” The direct object of the verb is the word “wife” (Greek, *gune*). *Gune* may mean just a woman or it may refer to a woman who is a wife. It is *feminine gender* and *singular* in number. Its case is *accusative* which only indicates that it is the object of the verb, “put away.” This clause is joined to the next clause by a coordinate conjunction, “and” (*kai*).

The second clause is “marry another.” The unstated subject is the same “man” of the first clause. The verb is “marry.” The object of the verb is the word “another.” An assertion has been made that this second clause is subordinate to the first clause, amounting to nothing but a parenthesis. This is said in order to, somehow, push it out of the way and tie the third clause, “(he) commits adultery against her” to the first clause so that “her” refers to the put away woman. But, that is not possible. First, *kai*

(*and*) is a *coordinate conjunction*. Daniel Wallace in his book, *Greek Grammar Beyond Basics*, page 667, says, “The coordinate conjunction links equal elements together, e.g., a subject (or other part of speech) to a subject (or other part of speech), sentence to sentence, or paragraph to paragraph.” Most any Greek Grammar will say the same thing. It means that (*kai/and*) joins words or phrases of equal status. “(He) marries another” cannot be subordinate to the first clause; it cannot be a parenthesis. The action in the third clause depends on that of both the first and second clauses. It takes the process of putting away one person followed by remarrying someone else to result in “commits adultery against her” in this verse.

Is it not interesting that Baptist preachers make the same argument on Acts 2:38 regarding the conjunction *kai*? They insist that “*and (kai)* be baptized” is a parenthesis and thus “for the remission of sins” has application only to “repent.” That is just as valid as the assertion on Mark 10:11.

The word, “another” in the second clause is from the Greek word *allos*. *Allos* is an *indefinite pronoun*. It is indefinite because it does not name a specific person. Though the word “woman” is not specifically stated in the text, it is a noun that is *included* in *allos*. “Woman” is a part of the word itself because the form of the word, *allein*, is *feminine gender*. The significance of that meaning in grammatical structure is common in Greek. *Allein* is singular in number because only one woman is being considered. It is accusative case because it is the direct object of the verb “marry.”

It has been insisted by some that *allein* in this passage is an *adjective* and can thus be dismissed as an antecedent of the personal pronoun, *her*. By saying that, some hope to prove that only the put away wife can be the antecedent and thus, in some way, the adultery is actually committed against the put away wife.

An adjective modifies a noun in that it changes or describes a noun, but what noun does *allein* (another) modify? There is nothing about *allein* that changes or describes the word *gune*, the put away woman. “Another” does not change nor describe “wife.” And, it could not modify the man because neither pronoun nor adjective in the female gender could modify the male gender. When the pronoun, *allos*, stands alone, answering to a *who* that must be supplied from *allos* itself, then it is an indefinite pronoun and identifies the person contained in it, *a woman*. Perhaps we can illustrate this from Matthew 26:69-71 –

“Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilaeen. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

There are two maids in these passages. In verse 71, the translators have added the word “maid” in italics in order to indicate the word is not in the Greek text. The

word that *is* there is *allei*, feminine, singular of *allos*. The second woman is a maid like the one stated in verse 69 is a maid. But, the second maid (*allei*) does not modify, change nor describe the first maid at all. *Allei* only introduces a second maid to the story.

Likewise, *allein*, in Mark 10:11, is introducing a *second woman* to the reader. Since the word for “woman” in Greek is the noun *gune*, as in the first clause, *allein* is introducing a *second gune* to the reader just as *allei* in Matthew 26 introduces a *second maid*. *Allein* identifies her as another woman *numerically* different from the first one. And, as with *gune* in the first clause, the second *gune* is feminine, singular.

The phrase in Mark 10:11 is grammatically identical to Matthew 19:9. It is *kai gamese allein moixatai* in both places. Has anyone really had a problem in Matthew 19:9 with understanding that the man is putting away his wife and marrying another woman? In Matthew 19:9, how does *allein* change or describe the wife who has been put away? It doesn't. Mark 10:12 gives us the perspective of a woman doing what the man does in verse 11. If she puts away her husband and marries another (*allon*, masculine, singular), she commits adultery. Is there any doubt that *allon* here means she married *another man*? Luke 16:18 has different grammatical forms of the terms from that of Mark, while the meaning is the same. Whereas, Matthew and Mark use *allos*, Luke uses *heteros* (feminine, singular, accusative) which is translated as *another*, both words referring to a woman other than the put away wife. *Allos* and *heteros* mean the same thing in these passages and the switch in terms would only refer to a perspective about the second woman.

The general meaning of *allos* is another numerically of the same kind. *Heteros* ordinarily means another numerically of a different kind (see Galatians 1:6-7), though there are exceptions so that both words are used at times as synonyms. If there is any difference between Matthew/Mark and Luke on *allos* or *heteros*, it is this: Luke may be indicating by using *heteros* that the second woman is a woman but is not a “wife” as is the first woman, a difference in relationship with the man. This can be illustrated by Herod and Herodias, Mark 6. Though they had married, she was still considered to be the wife of Philip. Herod was the “other man” in this instance but did not stand in relationship with Herodias as did Philip. Regardless, both *allos* and *heteros* in these verses are pronouns that identify the noun contained within the words.

But, just for the sake of argument, let's say for the moment that *allein* here is an adjective. We can let an expert tell us about Adjectives. The following is from *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by Dana and Mantey, page 117.

“The genius of the adjective is description. It denotes some fact which distinguishes or qualifies a noun. Thus in the expression ‘beautiful garden’ the adjective simply points to the fact of beauty as it relates to the garden. But note that the adjective designates a state of being, *beauty*, just as the noun designates an object,

*garden*. So the fundamental sense of the expression might be represented ‘beauty-garden’ (a garden of beauty). Thus, in its function, we see that the adjective is at heart a substantive, being the outgrowth of a noun used in qualifying relationship with another noun.”

The significance of *allein* is “second-woman.” Those two words cannot be separated in meaning with the emphasis on “woman,” a noun. Notice that Dana and Mantey say that the function of an adjective is at heart a substantive. But, whether we view *allein* as a pronoun or an adjective, it is still a substantive. Being a substantive, it can be the antecedent of a personal pronoun, as is true in Mark 10:11.

The prepositional phrase in Mark 10:11, “against her,” is *ep’ autein*. “Her,” *autein*, is a personal pronoun that is feminine, singular, accusative. The rule of Greek grammar is that a personal pronoun must agree with its antecedent in *gender* and *number*. It may also agree in *case* but not necessarily. But, seeing that both *gune* and *allein* (*gune*) are singular, feminine, accusative, either one, by the rule of grammar, may be the antecedent of “her.” However, it cannot be said, by the rule of grammar *alone*, that the antecedent of the personal pronoun is definitely the first woman, the one who was “put away.”

To draw this more exactly, a second rule of grammar for antecedent qualification must be applied. The closest substantive that agrees with the personal pronoun in gender and number is the antecedent. In this instance, it is *allein* (*gune*), the woman in the remarriage, the second woman that is in the clause immediately before *ep’ autein*. This means that the second woman, the one of the remarriage, is the antecedent of the personal pronoun, “her.”

**Second**, the meaning of “commits adultery.” There are several word forms that refer to adultery. From *moikuomai* comes the verb form in Mark 10, *moikatai*. This term in this form, *moikatai*, is found in only five places in the New Testament and not once in the Septuagint. It refers to the *literal action of unlawful sexual intercourse* in these passages. The verses are –

Matthew 5:32 – “Whoever marries her when she is put away *commits adultery*.”

Matthew 19:9 – “Whosoever shall put away his wife ..... and shall marry another, *committeth adultery*: and he that marrieth her when she is put away *committeth adultery*.”

Mark 10:11 – “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, *committeth adultery* against her.”

Mark 10:12 – “...and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she *committeth adultery*.”

Of course, Luke 16:18 belongs here but it must be noted that “commiteth adultery” is a different grammatical form than in these other passages. Luke 16:18 says –

“Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery.” “Committeth adultery” appears twice in this passage and comes from *moikeuei*. Unlawful sexual relations is still the meaning.

Further, “commits adultery” is not figurative but literal. This should be clear on the flip side of the context, Mark 10:12 – “and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.” Whereas verse 11 looks at the process from the standpoint of the man, verse 12 turns it around to show that the same rules apply if the woman is the one who puts away her husband and marries another man. By putting away and then remarrying, she commits adultery. The meaning of adultery is the same in both verses. The man who marries “another” is guilty of unlawful sexual relations against...whom? Not the wife he put away. He can only be having unlawful sexual relations with the woman he marries, the second woman. In doing this, the man is involving the second woman in sinful sexual intercourse.

Let’s look at Matthew 5:32. The exception clause is a true parenthesis and we will leave it out for the moment. It thus says that “...every one that putteth away his wife ... maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.” This emphasizes the accountability of the man who puts away his wife unlawfully. He “causes her to commit adultery,” so says another translation. This is said on the assumption that the put away woman will not remain celibate. This is seen in the clause about the one who marries her when she is put away. They both commit adultery in that case. Putting away a spouse, just the act itself, does not make anyone an adulteress. What if the man of Matthew 5:32 remains celibate? In that case it would still be true that he causes her to commit adultery, if she remarried.

Whereas, Matthew 5:32 looks at the subject from the point of view of the effect that putting away has on the woman who is put away, Mark 10:11 is looking at the subject from the point of view of the man who does the putting away and the effect on the woman *he* then marries.

**Third**, the meaning of “against her,” *ep’ autein*. The third clause in Mark 10:11 tells us that in putting away and remarrying “(he) commits adultery against her.” Again, the “he” is understood without its being stated. “Against her” is a prepositional phrase that is the object of the verb, “commits adultery.” The translation of the preposition, *epi*, as meaning “against” is ambiguous. Greek Grammarian, Nigel Turner, points out – “On the other hand, this is not Mark’s usual employment of *epi* with accusative, and when he does use it for *against*, he does not mean it in a sense like *sinning against*, but always of *violence against* (Satan divided and rising against his own kingdom; nation rising against nation; children rising against their parents; with swords and staves against a robber).” *The Bible Translator*, Oct. 1956, pages 151-

152. See also Gingrich & Danker, page 288, who use the expression “*hostile intent*” when “against” is the meaning. Thayer, page 135, says that in using “against” as the meaning of *epi* with the accusative, it refers to “*things done with hostility.*” However, other Lexicons, as do Thayer and Gingrich & Danker, give several terms as possible meanings of *epi* with the accusative. Its most basic meaning is “upon” but it may mean *to, toward, concerning, with respect to.* A *Critical Lexicon* by Bullinger, page 35, says of *epi* with the accusative, “(wither) upon, by direction towards; to, implying an intention (for, against).”

The conclusion in the article by Nigel Turner mentioned above is that *epi* with the accusative should be translated “with.” He is not alone in this. The *Greek/English Interlinear* by Alfred Marshall, page 182, translates it “with.” A *Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* by Robert Hanna, page 77, says, “The preposition *epi* has the sense of ‘with’ after the verb *moikatai.*” Hanna’s work is a compendium of major Greek grammars. Robinson’s *Greek And English Lexicon*, page 245, says, “after verbs which include the idea of alliance, etc. *with...*” Parkhurst’s *Greek and English Lexicon*, page 197, Bass’s *Greek and English Manual Lexicon*, page 84 and Laing’s *A New Greek And English Lexicon*, page 154, also include “with” as an optional translation of *epi* with the accusative. These comments cannot be simply brushed aside as of no consequence.

From the above information, the phrase could as well be translated, commits adultery *with respect to her*, commits adultery *with her*, commits adultery *upon her*, commits adultery *concerning her* or commits adultery *toward her*. In keeping with Bullinger and others, who say it *could* imply an intention *either for or against*, it could be translated as “commits adultery *for her*,” that is, *commits adultery in order to have her*. With other possible meanings of *epi* with the accusative, to insist on translating it as “against” sounds more like forced interpretation by translation. The text does not *require* “against” as the proper translation.

However, let’s go with the word, “against” and see where it takes us. We have already seen Lexicographers and Greek Grammarians who uniformly say that when *epi* with the *accusative* means “against,” it refers to hostility or violence toward someone. A person is thus harmed by the action under consideration. However, any violence or hostility toward the put away wife was already done when the man put her away. After all, Matthew 5:32 says that the man who puts away his wife causes her to commit adultery, or, makes her an adulteress; that *does* indeed harm her. But, by the act of marrying another woman, the man does not do violence to nor commit a hostile act toward the put away wife; he does not harm her by this. If the put away wife is indeed the antecedent of “her” by which it somehow gives her the right to remarry, it would not do harm to her but would be a joyous event; she would be pleased by it! It would free her.

However, he does do violence to the second woman by marrying her. It harms her because he includes her in his adultery. He makes her an adulteress and that places her soul in danger. Going with the translation “against” here still does not establish any violence committed against the put away woman.

The evidence is clear. The personal pronoun in the third clause of Mark 10:11 refers to the second woman he marries, not to the put away woman of the first clause. The man does not “commit adultery against” the put away woman, but rather the second woman.

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## **MARK 10:11-12 REVISITED**

**By Maurice Barnett**

“*And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.*” An article in this paper last month analyzed verse 11. I suggest that you reread that article. It was concluded there that the antecedent of the personal pronoun “her” was the second woman, the woman the man marries, the one contained in the word “another.” Enough evidence was presented in that article to show this to be true though all of the evidence was not presented there. I thought that it would not be necessary to go into so much detail. However, it appears that we must give more attention to these points.

***Allos/another:*** Although *allos* is classified as a pronoun in the Gramcord system, its actual function varies. Gingrich and Danker Lexicon says it is an adjective and substantive. This is echoed in Zodhiates’ *Complete Word Study Bible* on Mark 10:11 where it is listed as an adjectival noun. We can see these uses of the word in various passages. It may describe a noun in that the noun is “another” numerically of something in the same class. Or, the noun may be contained in the word *allos*, itself, and *allos* stands in the place of that unspecified noun. As Zodhiates says, it is both an adjective and a noun because it describes the noun contained in the word.

It continues to be boldly stated that neither a pronoun nor an adjective can be the antecedent of a personal pronoun and thus *allos* in Mark 10:11 could not be the antecedent of the pronoun “her” in that passage. It is asserted that *only a noun* can be the antecedent of a pronoun. Such a position is totally untrue. This is very easily proven and we need go no further than the passages in the New Testament on the subject of divorce and remarriage to do this. Note:

“And I say unto you, Whosoever (*hos*, pronoun) shall put away his (*autos*, pronoun) wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” Matthew 19:9.

“And he saith unto them, Whosoever (*hos*, pronoun) shall put away his (*autos*, pronoun) wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.” Mark 10:11.

In both of these passages, the pronoun, *hos*, is the antecedent of the personal pronoun, *autos*. In these passages, both *hos* and *autos* are masculine, singular, which identifies the connection between them. And, need we point out that the personal pronoun, *autos*, is the same pronoun translated as “her” in Mark 10:11? We can produce many passages in the New Testament where pronouns are the antecedents of pronouns but will not take up space here to do so. But, there is more that we will look at.

“..but I say unto you, that every one (*pas*, adjective) that putteth away his (*autos*, pronoun) wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress.” Matthew 5:32. “Every one (*pas*, adjective) that putteth away his (*autos*, pronoun) wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery.” Luke 16:18.

These two passages have the adjective, *pas*, as the antecedent of the personal pronoun, *autos*. Both are masculine, singular. And, as with pronouns as antecedents, there are many instances of adjectives as antecedents of personal pronouns in the New Testament. It does not matter whether or not *allos* functions as a pronoun, adjective or an adjectival noun, it is readily the antecedent of personal pronouns and the scriptures clearly prove that, as we will see. *Allos*, and its related term, *heteros*, have no meaning apart from a person, place, thing, time period or the like. The terms answer to who, what, when or where. They may refer to another person, another country, another boat, another day, another route, etc. *Allos* and *heteros* describe the person, place or thing as being another numerically from some other of the same class, along with a slight nuance of difference between the two terms in some passages, as we saw in the previous article.

At times, the noun being referred to is specified in the original text along side *allos* or *heteros* and at times, it is contained within the words *allos* and *heteros* alone. Either way, one cannot separate *allos* or *heteros* from the noun that accompanies it, whether the noun is specified in the text or not.

We noted in the previous article that Matthew 26:69-71 tells us about Peter’s encounter with several people, while Jesus is before the chief priests. A maid identified Peter as a disciple, which he denied. Then “another (*allos*)” maid said the same thing, which Peter again denied. The translators added the word “maid” in italics but it does not appear in the Greek text. Yet, that is exactly what *allos*, by itself, means in the passage, *another maid*. She was a slave girl just like the one mentioned in verse

69, another numerically. Now, to the parallel account in Luke 22:56-60,

“And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light *of the fire*, and looking stedfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him. 57 But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not. 58 And after a little while another (*heteros*) saw him, and said, Thou also art *one* of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not. 59 And after the space of about one hour another (*allos*) confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Galilaeen. 60 But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.”

The first man mentioned is identified by *heteros*, another. It points to a second *person* numerically different from the woman previously mentioned. Yet, it indicates that though this is another numerically, there is also a difference in that it is now a man instead of a woman. In the second instance, verse 59, *allos* is used and translated *another* to indicate another numerically but he is *also* a man as was the person just mentioned. Peter responds to both of them by calling them “man.” There is no doubt that *heteros* and *allos* both, by themselves, mean *man*, or *another-man*. This is further indicated by the fact that both *heteros* and *allos* are masculine gender. Peter could have said it differently and the text would have then recorded it: “*Peter said to him, I know not what thou sayest,*” using a personal pronoun instead of the word “man.” That would have made both *heteros* and *allos* antecedents of a personal pronoun.

In other uses where the accompanying noun is specified in the text with pronouns following, John 18:15 mentions “another disciple” as antecedent to the pronoun *ekeinos*. In Matthew 21:36, it has “other servants” antecedent to the pronoun, *autos*. Matthew 4:21 has “other brethren” as antecedent to *autos* that twice follows. These are just some of the passages where the attendant noun is specified along with *allos*.

But, what about passages where *allos* stands alone, without a specific noun accompanying it? Well, note the following passages. “For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another (*allos*), Come, and he (*in verb*) cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” Luke 7:8.

Here *allos* stands alone to mean *another-soldier*. The personal pronoun, “he,” is contained in the 3rd person, singular verb, *erkomai*. That is what 3rd person, singular means in the verb form. *Allos* is the antecedent of the personal pronoun.

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another (*allos*) shall come in his own name, him (*ekeinos*) ye will receive.” John 5:43.

Here, again, *allos* stands alone to simply identify *another-person*. It is the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun, *ekeinos*. If one is interested in a passage that

uses the related term, *heteros*, which is translated “another (woman)” in Luke 16:18, then look at Matthew 15:30,

“And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others (*heteros*), and they cast them (*autos*) down at his feet; and he healed them (*autos*).”

Here, *heteros* is the antecedent of the personal pronoun, *autos*, that appears twice after it in the passage. However, the following passages are even *more* directly related to Mark 10:11 because *allos* stands alone as the antecedent of the personal pronoun *autos*. *This is the very thing that some deny is even possible*. Let’s see.

“And others (*allos*) fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them (*autos*).” Matthew 13:7.

“And about the eleventh *hour* he went out, and found others (*allos*) standing; and he saith unto them (*autos*), Why stand ye here all the day idle?” Matthew 20:6.

“I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not labored: others (*allos*) have labored, and ye are entered into their (*autos*) labor.” John 4:38.

“And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another (*allos*), committeth adultery against her (*autos*).” Mark 10:11.

In each of these passages, *allos* stands alone with the *noun* contained within the word *allos*, itself. A quibble has even been made regarding whether or not *allos* has a definite article attached to it, which is supposed to make some difference. In each of the above passages, there is no article with either *allos* or *heteros*. It is obvious, however, that they are antecedents of the pronouns. Whether *allos* is singular or plural makes no difference to the function of an antecedent. Likewise, the particular noun contained in the word has no bearing on the grammatical construct. In each of the above passages, *allos* is the antecedent of the personal pronoun, *autos*. In each passage, *autos* agrees with *allos* in gender and number, the necessary requirements for an antecedent. In each of these passages, *allos* is a substantive. Seeing that *allos* in Mark 10 is the nearest substantive to the personal pronoun, then the “second-woman” is the antecedent of “her,” not the woman who was put away.

**“Against” her:** We took note in the previous article that when the preposition, *epi*, with the accusative case means “against” that it refers to violence or hostility against someone. To illustrate this, let’s look at John 8:3-7. A woman is taken in adultery. The Law of Moses prescribed stoning to death in such an event. The Jews were trying to get Jesus to say whether she should be stoned or not. Either assertion by Him would have endangered Him with the people on one hand or the Roman authorities on the other. His response was, “He that is without sin among you first cast a stone at her.” The word for “woman” in verse three is the Greek word, *gune*, as in Mark 10:11. In the statement of Jesus, “at her” is *epi* with the accusative case with

the personal pronoun, *autos*, also as in Mark 10:11. *Gune*, in verse 3, is no doubt the antecedent of the personal pronoun, *autos*, in verse 7. And, there is no doubt that to translate the prepositional phrase as “at (against) her” is correct *in this place*. *Stoning the woman would certainly be an act of violence, of hostility; she would be harmed by it*. Now, this kind of instance is what is meant by Lexicons when they talk about *epi* with the accusative meaning “against” in some passages. However, look at Mark 10:11. “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.” Where in this passage is there even the slightest implication of violence or hostility against the put away woman such as illustrated in John 8? Such a position on Mark 10 exists only in the imagination. It is a theological interpretation, an assertion of one’s opinion. There is nothing in the grammar, terms, overall statement or context that would *require* that conclusion. If so, where is it? Will anyone deny that the man who puts away his wife without the cause of fornication and marries another commits unlawful sexual relations with the woman he marries? “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery *with her*” is true. Verse 12 takes the same rule from the woman’s standpoint as follows, “and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.” With whom does she commit adultery? She commits adultery with the man she marries. If one still insists on “against” as the proper translation of the preposition, then it would only apply to the woman he marries seeing, first, that she is the antecedent of the pronoun, and second, he does, indeed, harm her by involving her in committing adultery. And, *that is adultery that continues*, Romans 7:2-3! As long as the put away woman lives, the woman he marries will be an adulteress just as he will be an adulterer. The man harms her when he marries her. If this isn’t enough to establish the matter, there is more; we have not yet exhausted all of the information and evidence. I will state the conclusion, again. The evidence shows that the antecedent of the personal pronoun “her” in Mark 10:11 is the second woman, the one the man marries.

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## **A Response to Brother Barnett on Mark 10:10-12**

**By Jeff Smelser**

In the current discussion concerning the marital prospects of certain persons who have been divorced, some have argued that in Mark 10:11 when Jesus said, “*Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her,*” the

*her* refers to the second wife, not the first. Those who make this argument suggest that Jesus may have meant the man commits adultery **with** the second wife, rather than **against** her.

There's no denying the man commits adultery with the second wife. But is that really what this passage is saying?"

### The Closest Substantive...?"

In two articles recently published in Gospel Truths (XIV:10, Oct, '03 & XIV:11 Nov., '03), Maurice Barnett identifies the *her* with the second woman. He argues that *another* must be the antecedent of *her* because "the closest substantive that agrees with the personal pronoun in gender and number is the antecedent."

It is true that we will tend to look first to the closest eligible substantive as the antecedent. But brother Barnett overstates the matter. Just a quick glance at the first couple of chapters of the first book of the New Testament yields several examples of this same pronoun (autoV) referring to a more remote antecedent when there is a nearer substantive agreeing with the pronoun in gender and number. I see examples in Mt. 1:20, 1:24, 2:2, and 2:5. If we were to rely on proximity without taking into consideration the context, in Mt. 2:2 we would have to suppose the last part of the verse means "we came to worship it," i.e., the star. In Mt. 2:5, if we were to rely on proximity without considering the fact that there is a dialogue between Herod and the chief priests and scribes about the Christ, we would have to suppose that the beginning of the verse means, "They said to the Christ..."

The word order in the Greek text at Mt. 4:11 is such that the nearest substantive preceding the second pronoun translated *him* is diabolov (*devil*), but clearly the angels came and ministered to Jesus, not to the devil.

In Mt. 4:22, the fact that James and John left their father removes him from logical eligibility as the antecedent of *him* whom they followed, even though *father* is the nearest substantive that precedes and agrees with the pronoun. In the parallel passage in Mark 1:20, noting that the pronoun translated *him* could be taken as either masculine or neuter, the antecedent would have to be *boat* if relative proximity is determinative. The second choice would be *their father Zebedee*. Both of these are closer to the pronoun than the actual antecedent which is *Jesus*, last mentioned explicitly in verse 17.

In Mark 10:2 we have the word translated *man* as the nearest masculine singular substantive prior to the pronoun translated *him*. However, grammatically, it must be the Pharisees who are doing the testing of *him* by means of their question, and therefore it makes no sense to suppose that the object of their testing is the hypothetical man within their question. Rather, the object of their testing and the antecedent of

the pronoun is *him* whom they were questioning, *Jesus*, mentioned earlier in the verse but not explicitly named since verse 39 of the preceding chapter.

The foregoing passages illustrate the point that the closest substantive agreeing with the pronoun in number and gender is not necessarily its antecedent. Factors other than relative proximity and agreement in number and gender help to identify the antecedent of a pronoun, and in fact a more remote substantive may be the antecedent.

But perhaps the best way to show the error of staking so much on proximity in Mark 10:11 in particular is by means of Jn. 9:16. This passage is very similar to Mk. 10:11 inasmuch as both passages have a form of the word alloV (*other*) as the closest substantive of like gender and number prior to a pronoun that is a form of autoV. In John 9:16, we read,

Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath.” But **others** (alloi) were saying, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And a division arose among **them** (autois).

Notice that the antecedent of autois (*them*) is not alloi (*others*) but is the more remote *Pharisees*. No, we cannot apply the “rule” stated by brother Barnett so rigidly.

### ”*With Her*”? Listen to the Horses

Because brother Barnett believes it is the second wife who is the object of the preposition in Mark 10:11, he thinks we might perhaps understand Jesus to say the man commits adultery *with* her, rather than *against* her. Jeff Belknap quotes Donnie Rader as suggesting the same thing, and both Barnett and Rader cite Nigel Turner.

The preposition translated *against* in Mk. 10:11 is epi. The basic meaning of epi, regardless of the case with which it is used, is *upon*, and all nuances as flavored by its use with various cases in various contexts grow out of this idea. Robertson said,

Sometimes indeed in the causal and ethical usages the root-idea seems dim, but none the less it is there. The only safety consists in holding on to the root-idea and working out from that in each special context. (A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 600)

*Against* is merely one of the various context and case flavored nuances of epi arising from the fundamental meaning *upon*. epi might be used of coming *upon* someone or something, as in Mt. 3:16, 10:13, Mt. 21:19/Mk 11:13, Ac 8:36, Ac 12:10, and Acts 12:12. But if the coming is adversarial, in English we might communicate that idea by saying one comes *against* someone or something, though in Greek the preposition is still epi, as in Lk. 14:31, Eph. 5:6, and Mt. 26:55/Mk. 14:48. In these last

examples, though the context indicates the adversarial idea, the meaning of *epi* is still basically *upon*.

A good example in English of using *upon* in an adversarial sense is the expression, *perpetrate a fraud upon the public*. In Mark 10:11, *epi* has generally been understood in a similar way. A man commits adultery upon his wife, i.e., in his adulterous conduct, he betrays her. However, in English, we don't speak of this sort of sin against a spouse as committing adultery *upon* the spouse. Therefore, the passage is translated, "he commits adultery against her."

What context could we imagine wherein the root idea *upon* would in effect end up meaning *with*, i.e., *in concert with*? In fact, there is no other NT passage where *epi* is understood to mean such a thing.

Some have suggested that Mark may use *epi* for *with* in Mk. 10:11 due to Semitic influence. But if the expression makes perfectly good sense without such a hypothesis, why hypothesize? And it does make perfectly good sense if we understand *epi* in an adversarial sense.

But brother Barnett cited noted grammarian Nigel Turner in support of taking *epi* to mean *with* in Mark 10:10-12. Nigel Turner wrote volumes 3 and 4, (*Syntax and Style*) for Grammar of New Testament Greek, the grammar which bears the name of J.H. Moulton. In the volume on *Syntax*, Turner cited Mk. 10:11 as an example of *epi* for *with* (p. 272), but it is in the article which brother Barnett cited that Turner explained his rationale. That very brief article was published in *The Bible Translator*, vol. 7 no. 4, 1956, pp. 151f.

Turner thought he found a precedent for taking *epi* to mean *with* in Jer. 5:8 in the Septuagint. (He actually cited the passage as Jer. 5:9.) The picture is of a stallion neighing for a mare, not explicitly of copulation with a mare, though of course that was the desire. Translating from the Septuagint, the passage is, "*They became female-crazed horses, each one was neighing to the wife of his neighbor,*" **not** "*neighing with the wife of his neighbor.*" (*epi* = *upon* can often be represented by *to* in English.) But it appears that Turner lost sight of the imagery that is present in Jeremiah. It seems he got ahead of the imagery, thought "*committing adultery with the wife of his neighbor,*" and thus misconstrued *epi*. Then, based on his misconception of the Jeremiah passage, he saw a precedent for taking *epi* in Mark to mean *with*.

But there was just a bit more to it than that. Turner appealed to the pseudepigraphal Psalms of Solomon to support his idea. He saw in Ps. of Solomon 8:10 an echo of the phrase in Jer. 5:8. But in Ps. of Solomon 8:10 there is no allusion to horses neighing. Rather the text simply talks about committing adultery, "each one with his neighbor's wife." And apparently on no other basis Turner suggests, "It would seem that some in the early Christian period regarded the verbs *moicaomai* and *cremetizw* (= *neigh*, *js*) as practically synonymous." This he deduces merely because a phrase about "each

one” and “his neighbor’s wife” is found both in Jeremiah and the Psalms of Solomon, and because one context uses the verb *cremetizw* while the other uses the verb *moicaomai*.

That’s really all there is as a basis for Turner’s suggestion that Mk. 10:11 should be translated *with her*, having reference to the second woman. But the use of the two different verbs should not lead us to conclude the verbs were interchangeable in anyone’s mind. Rather the difference in verbs is due to that fact that in one passage the imagery of horses is present while in the other passage, it is not.

Turner did suggest that *against her* is somewhat difficult for a couple of reasons. He said Mark’s other uses of *epi* in the sense of *against* aren’t about sinning against someone but instead have in view doing violence against someone. And he also mentioned the preference of looking for the antecedent of a pronoun in the nearer object rather in the more remote object. But neither of these points is a great difficulty and neither is a sufficient reason for alleging a new meaning for *epi*. Regarding Mark’s use of *epi* with the accusative case in the adversarial sense of *against*, there are these 7 occurrences:

Mk. 3:24 kingdom divided *against* itself

Mk. 3:25 house divided *against* itself

Mk. 3:26 Satan rises up *against* himself

Mk. 13:8 nation *against* nation

kingdom *against* kingdom

Mk. 13:12 children rise up *against* parents

Mk. 14:48 come out as *against* a robber

If we think of the betrayal of one’s spouse that is involved in adultery, the occurrence in Mk. 10:11 seems at home among these. What wife of an adulterous husband does not feel that she has been wronged by his infidelity?

When Turner argued that the adversarial use of *epi* is only found in contexts of violence, he was speaking only with reference to Mark’s use of the preposition. Brother Barnett, in his second article, seems to go a step further and suppose that this is generally true. We need only consider Lk. 9:5 (a testimony *against* them), 1 Cor. 7:36 (to behave dishonorably *toward* his virgin daughter), and 2 Cor. 10:2 (to be bold *against* some) to see *epi* used with adversarial force but with no hint of violence.

#### If the Second Woman Had Been Intended...

When *moicaw* is used of committing adultery with a woman or debauching her, that is, when the woman involved in the illicit relationship is mentioned as an object of the verb, there is no need for a preposition at all. We usually see merely the verb

and its object. This was the case in the previously mentioned Ps. of Solomon 8:10. See also in the Septuagint, Jer. 36:23 (=29:23 in English), and in Lysias, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* 1.15. In Rev. 2:22 where we do see a preposition, the preposition is meta, not epi: “Behold I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery *with* (meta) her into great tribulation...”

### Did No One Notice This?

It ought also to be noted that if we understand the second wife to be the one against whom the man commits adultery, we have a problem. By taking the *her* to refer to the second wife, we make the reference to putting away the first wife merely an explanation of the occasion of marrying and adulterating the second woman. The first wife disappears from view and the second woman comes into focus as the primary object, the object of both the verb translated *marries* and the preposition epi. Then the following clause has intensive autoV, represented in English by the word *herself* - “*And if she herself should put away her husband...*” The *herself* functions to call attention to the fact that the woman who was the object in the preceding clause is now the subject of the action, in contrast to the man who had previously been the subject of the action. So if we assume the object of the preposition is the second woman, now we have Jesus saying that the second wife has no right to put away the adulterous husband, the husband who had no right to marry her in the first place. The meaning would be,

*Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery with her* (i.e., the second woman). *And if she herself* (i.e., the second woman, now married illicitly) *divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.*

Thus those who are contending that the *her* is the second wife end up unwittingly making Jesus teach that the woman in the adulterous second marriage must stay in it.

### Conclusion

Rather than invent a new meaning for epi and force the passage to teach that the adulterous union must persist, we do better to retain the translation that has long been accepted, the man commits adultery *against* her, and to understand the *her* to have reference to the first wife. Even Nigel Turner said, “It cannot be denied that the most frequent translation, *commit adultery against* (the first woman), is possible.

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**CORRECTION:** In the above article, I mistakenly cited Rev. 2:22 and Lysias, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* 1.15 as if the verb moicaw is used in these places. In fact,

it is not the verb moicaw that is used in these two places, but the cognate moiceuw. In Liddell-Scott-Jones, the two verbs are treated as interchangeable, and Nigel Turner reasoned that an investigation of prepositional use with moicaw ought to be extended “to cover both words” because “in Matthew and Mark the use of either word appears to depend only on the tense required.” For my part, I am not convinced the two are interchangeable even in Matthew and Mark. I can see a potential distinction to be discerned in the use of a preposition with the respective verbs. Given that, I think it best not to cite Rev. 2:22 and Lysias 1:15 in support of the point I was making above. The fact that a preposition would not have been needed had Jesus meant to refer to the woman who was party to the adultery is sufficiently established by Jer. 36:23 (LXX) and Ps. of Sol. 8:10. -JS

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## RESPONSE TO BROTHER SMELSER

By Maurice Barnett

*“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.”*

I feel compelled to apologize to the reader for the need to be so technical in this discussion. But, when differences go “deep,” it is most times necessary to go just as deep in order to make a reply. There will be words and rules of grammar in this article that may not be familiar to many readers. This may only be because it has been many years since the readers studied these things in school. The discussion on Mark 10:11-12 has focused on substantives, pronouns and antecedents. A “*substantive*” may be a noun, pronoun, adjective or other word that functions as a noun. An “*antecedent* (‘going before’)” is a substantive that is replaced by a pronoun later in a sentence. But, even a preposition can have an antecedent. I have contended that in Mark 10:11, “another,” one of the *substantives* in the verse, is the *antecedent* of the *pronoun*, “her.”

My two recent articles in Gospel Truths responded to a position now being advanced which claims that the put away woman is the *only* substantive in the verse. Thus, the pronoun, “her,” absolutely *must* refer to the put away woman and *cannot possibly* refer to the woman the man marries. It is further claimed that “against her” is the correct and *unchangeable* translation of the prepositional phrase. From these assertions comes yet another assertion saying that the adultery, which is somehow committed “against” the put away wife, gives her the right, in some sense, to “put away” the man who put her away and marry again without sin. The proponents of

this hypothesis *must* have Mark 10:11 teach their assertions as it is vital to their conclusion. It is not clear just how far brother Smelser goes along with this position but he clearly supports some of its premises.

I said in my last article that there was more evidence on this verse than I had covered to that point. Before learning that brother Smelser was responding to me, I had started on a third article on this passage. Brother Smelser has provided subjects and passages that I had planned to cover in that article and an opportunity to discuss the subject further.

### **Antecedents**

Brother Smelser thinks that my articles were too rigid an application of the nearest antecedent principle, that I overstated the case. Yet, he says:

“It is true that we will tend to look first to the closest eligible substantive as the antecedent.”

Why do we do that? We do that because it is a basic rule of grammar regarding antecedents. But, notice the key word in *brother Smelser’s statement*: “eligible.” In the passages he gives us, the closest substantive is not “eligible” because the *context* shows that to be the case. His passages are not parallel to Mark 10:11. The context may require, as in Matthew 1:20, that the nearest substantive cannot be the antecedent. Yet, in some New Testament passages the context requires that the nearest substantive must be the antecedent. Notice again what brother Smelser says:

“Factors other than relative proximity and agreement in number and gender help to identify the antecedent of a pronoun, and in fact a more remote substantive may be the antecedent.”

What he is saying is that the *context* determines how we take the passage. However, when there is a context such as Mark 10:11 where there are two *eligible* substantives that can qualify as antecedents, then we take the nearest one. That is where the rule of antecedents applies and is what I was referring to in my articles. I do appreciate brother Smelser’s admitting that *allein* (another) functions as a substantive in Mark 10:11, a fact that some emphatically deny.

Brother Smelser *thinks* he has a parallel to Mark 10:11 in John 9:16, which is supposed to show a remote antecedent. He thinks the passages are “very similar.” However, “similar” does not mean *identical*. John 9:16 says:

“Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was division among them.”

It is true that the three terms, “some,” “Pharisees,” and “others” are all masculine plural, as is the pronoun, “them.” All of those involved here are in a single class,

the Pharisees. Some Pharisees thought one thing and other Pharisees something else and thus the Pharisees were divided. Both the “some” and the “others” modify and are part of the class: “Pharisees.” The Pharisees are stated in the first clause and implied in the second. Contextually, the “some” Pharisees were divided from the “other Pharisees.” The only “eligible” antecedent is the Pharisees. Notice that the pronoun, “them,” is plural and not singular as in Mark 10:11. I said in my first article:

“The rule of Greek grammar is that a personal pronoun must agree with its antecedent in *gender* and *number*. It may also agree in case but not necessarily. But, seeing that both *gune* and *allein* (*gune*) are singular, feminine, accusative, either one, by the rule of grammar, may be the antecedent of ‘her.’ However, it cannot be said, by the rule of grammar *alone*, that the antecedent of the personal pronoun is definitely the first woman, the one who was ‘put away.’”

Let’s add to our information on this some comments from two well known Greek scholars. The first is from Samuel Bloomfield in his work, *The Greek Testament With English Notes*, Vol. 1, p. 229. The second is W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 409:

“The *authn* is by some referred to the *repudiated wife*; by others, to the *newly married* one. Either may be admitted; but in the former case the sense of *epi* will be ‘to the injury of,’ in the latter, ‘in respect of;’ i.e. in his connection with.”

“The *ep’authn* at the end of ver. 11 may mean either against, to the prejudice of, her (the first wife), or with her (the second). The former view is taken by the leading modern exegetes, the latter by Victor Ant., Euthy., Theophy, and, among moderns, Ewald and Bleek.”

Notice that the understanding with these men is either/or, the first or second woman, but not both. Brother Smelser admits that there are two substantives in Mark 10:11 that agree with the pronoun in gender and number. He insists that the put away woman is the antecedent, though he only asserts that. But, let’s look at it another way, analyzing the clause, “(he) commits adultery against her.” The Greek phrase is *moichatai ep’ autein*. *Moichatai* is the verb, meaning “commits adultery,” *Ep’ (epi)* is the preposition, translated “against.” *Autein* is the feminine, singular pronoun meaning “her.”

I ask the reader to bear with me in a little journey into grammar. I’ll not take the space to quote grammatical authorities on this, but they are readily available. Also, this point of grammar is equally true in both Greek and English. In contexts such as Mark 10:11, a *preposition* is a relation word, showing how the verb connects to an object. *Epi* looks two ways, having both an object and an antecedent. The antecedent of a preposition can be a verb, noun, or pronoun. In the clause we are looking at, the object of the preposition is *autein*, “her.” The antecedent of the preposition is the verb, *moichatai*, “commits adultery.” The preposition, *epi*, joins the object and the

antecedent together. *Moichatai* is here a transitive verb, transferring the action of the verb to the object of the preposition *epi*, which is “her.” This forms an inseparable connection between the verb, “commits adultery,” and the object, “her.” Whatever *moichatai* means, it refers to only *one person*, the feminine, singular, *autein*. If it referred to both women, then the pronoun would have to be *plural*, but it is not. The prepositional phrase cannot be split from the verb to mean something other than what the verb means because it is connected to and identifies the object of the action of the verb.

Grammatically, “commits adultery” cannot refer to both the first and second woman of the passage. If the pronoun, her, refers to the put away woman, then *moichatai* is figurative and has *nothing at all* to do with sexual relations nor with the second woman. The grammar won’t allow that. If *moichatai* means literal sexual relations then it must refer to the woman the man marries and cannot refer to the put away woman. It cannot be both literal and figurative at the same time, regardless of the assertion of some theorists and the position of some commentaries. *Moichatai* means continuing unlawful sexual relations; it is durative. Continuing sexual relations is connected with the “her” of the clause. That being the case, the woman he marries is the only one to whom “her” can apply.

The current view, as we previously noted, is that “commits adultery” is both with the second woman and against the first one *all at the same time*. Actually, the current theory defines each word in Mark 10:11—divorce, marriage, adultery, her—two different ways, depending on what situation they want to justify. Brother Smelser says:

“It ought also to be noted that if we understand the second wife to be the one against whom the man commits adultery, we have a problem. By taking the *her* to refer to the second wife, we make the reference to putting away the first wife merely an explanation of the occasion of marrying and adulterating the second woman. The first wife disappears from view and the second woman comes into focus as the primary object, the object of both the verb translated marries and the preposition *epi*.”

That quote is classic human opinion, tentatively stated. Matthew 5:32 tells us what happens to the woman if he puts her away. Both Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 tell us that the one who marries the put away woman also commits adultery. When we put the details of Matthew 5:32, 19:9, Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11-12 together, we get the *complete* picture about *all four people* involved. The Holy Spirit adds more information, specifying what happens to the woman, in Romans 7:2-3. If the divorce is not for the cause of fornication, any remarriage on the part of either the man or woman, including those who marry them, is continuing unlawful sexual relations. In the quotation above, brother Smelser lifts Mark 10:11 out of the overall context of the other passages on the subject and draws a conclusion from limited premises.

Jesus said more on the subject on that very occasion than is recorded in Mark 10. When all is put together, Jesus said everything that needed to be said about both the man *and woman* as well as the people who marry them.

Brother Smelser attempts to create a dilemma for me with Mark 10:11-12 He says:

“The *herself* functions to call attention to the fact that the woman who was the object in the preceding clause is now the subject of the action, in contrast to the man who had previously been the subject of the action.”

He also says that I “end up unwittingly making Jesus teach that the woman in the adulterous second marriage must stay in it.” My, that really does make me look bad, provided we accept his assertions.

Brother Smelser’s argument centers on the identification of the antecedent of “She, herself.” There is here a variation in the Greek texts to be considered. Both the Receptus, on which the King James is based, and the Majority text have the noun, “gune” (wife, woman), just as it is in the first clause of verse 11, instead of the pronoun. So, the King James says, “And if a woman shall put away her husband...” That is certainly correct because the pronoun in the Nestle text is referring to the wife of the first clause of verse 11.

But, brother Smelser’s mistake is that he imagines that verse 12 *continues* the thought of verse 11. Rather, verse 12 is a *parallel* to verse 11. It is stated from the point of view of what happens if the *woman* divorces the husband and marries another man.

So, brother Smelser’s assertion is that, according to my reasoning, I must apply the “she, herself” in verse 12 to the second woman the man married in verse 11. That is a false assertion for two reasons.

First, recall our discussion about “eligible” substantives? The context of Mark 10:11-12 requires that we understand that if the wife does what the husband does, she suffers the same consequences. Second, and we will discuss this point in more detail shortly, in accounts of this overall subject that are parallel, we must transfer details of one account to the parallel. Brother Smelser, as he does throughout, is isolating Mark 10:11-12 from the other marriage, divorce and remarriage passages and thus misapplies the true context of what Jesus is saying. When combined with one another, the full statement of Jesus on *the very occasion* recorded in Mark 10:11-12 is:

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery against her, and whosoever shall marry (the wife) when she is put away commits adultery against (the wife). And, if (the wife) shall put away her husband, except for the cause of fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery against him, and whosoever shall marry (the husband) when he is put away commits adultery against (the husband).”

That is the context of Mark 10:11-12. Now, what is the “nearest substantive” to “she, herself” in the verse? It is the same *woman* of the first clause of Mark 10:11, the *gune* of the Receptus and Majority Texts.

I have asked the question before and it is still on the board. What is there *in the context of Mark 10:11* that *requires* us to take the remote substantive, the put away woman, to be the antecedent of the pronoun? To reach that conclusion, a principle with which brother Smelser agrees, *there must be something in the context that demands it!* Otherwise, the nearest substantive is the antecedent, the second woman.

### Nigel Turner

Brother Smelser wrote in his original email to brother Smith that I was leaning “on a bruised reed” in referring to Greek grammarian Nigel Turner. That seems very strange in light of his own *multiple* use of Turner in the article on his website discussing Matthew 19:9. Apparently, he thinks that I had based my entire case on Turner. If he could discredit Turner, then my articles were also discredited. It didn’t work. He disagrees with Turner’s paper on this and he is welcome to do so. I don’t agree with some of the things other grammarians say on the subject. What we must do is be certain we have all the facts before reaching a conclusion.

The first reference I made to Turner was to present his comments on the meaning of “against” in this passage. When used in translation of some verses where the context clearly requires “against,” it means something done with hostility or violence. All grammatical and lexical authorities who comment on it say the same thing. Many could be cited. Brother Smelser quoted A.T. Robertson on this, but here is what else Robertson says, page 602:

“In personal relations hostility is sometimes suggested though *epi* in itself does not mean ‘against.’”

And, how does one determine if “against” is the proper term in a verse if it is not *inherent* in *epi*? The context will *require* its use. I ask again, where does the context of Mark 10:11 require it?

The second reference I made to Turner was to show his conclusion that “with” should be the proper understanding of *epi* with the pronoun. But, Turner was only *one of several* grammatical authorities that I referred to and I *clearly* said that Turner “was not alone in this” position. I don’t feel any necessity to defend Turner. However, under the circumstances, I think some more information concerning him is appropriate.

In *A Grammatical Aid To The Greek New Testament* by Robert Hanna, p. 77, his only comment on Mark 10:11 is as follows—“The preposition *epi* has the sense of

‘with’ after the verb *moikatai*.” Hanna cites Turner’s *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. III, page 272, where Turner says: “*moikaomai with Mk. 10:11*.”

”*Zondervan’s Parallel Greek/English Testament* translates *epi, with*. This work was done by Alfred Marshall. On page xxxv, in the preface, the first comment under the heading of Notes On Particular Passages, Marshall says:

“Mark chp. 10, vs. 11 - An article by Dr. Nigel Turner in *The Bible Translator* for October 1956, gives good reasons for understanding the verse thus, autem referring to the last woman mentioned (*allein*).”

In the Gingrich and Danker *Lexicon*, page 526, under the word, *moichao*, the authors give their opinion, and nothing more than their opinion, supporting the first woman as the antecedent. Yet, immediately following that comment, they consider Nigel Turner to be important enough to make reference to his 1956 article. They obviously did not consider that Turner should just be ignored.

It should also be clear that where there are several noted linguists who agree with what Turner said, there are many others who also agree with him but have not put anything into print that we can reference. Brother Smelser may consider Turner a bruised reed but there are grammatical authorities who do not.

But, let’s look at others who also agree with Turner on the meaning of *epi* in this passage but do not make reference to him. We have already seen Bloomfield who says that if this refers to the second woman it means “with” and Nicoll who points out others who insist that “with” is the proper understanding, among whom he lists Ewald and Bleek. The *Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* by Brown and Comfort translate this as “with her.” We have already noted Marshall’s Interlinear and Hanna’s grammatical aid that are specific about it as well. Should we consider all of these to be “bruised reeds?”

Further, there are many authorities that list “with” as one meaning of *epi* with the accusative. Robinson’s *Greek And English Lexicon*, 1825, p. 245, says “after verbs which include the idea of alliance, etc., *with...*” Parkhurst’s *Greek and English Lexicon*, page 197, Bass’s *Greek and English Manual Lexicon*, page 84 and Laing’s *A New Greek And English Lexicon*, page 154, also include “with” as an optional translation of *epi* with the accusative. Bullinger’s *A Critical Lexicon*, page 28, says “2. *moikaomai*, to commit adultery, to be guilty of adultery by causing another to commit it...Mark 10:11-12.” I said before, and it is still true, that these authorities cannot be simply brushed aside as of no consequence. Turner was just *one* of several that I referred to on this subject!

Now, brother Smelser insists that there is not a single place where *epi* with accusative is translated or means, “with.” Here is what he says:

“What context could we imagine wherein the root idea upon would in effect end up meaning with, i.e., in concert with? In fact, there is no other NT passage where *epi* is understood to mean such a thing.”

That's quite a bold statement. Of course, if there were no other place in the New Testament where *epi* means "with," it could still be true that it means that in Mark 10. However, let's take a look at Hebrews 8:8:

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with (*epi*) the house of Israel and with (*epi*) the house of Judah;" ASV

Twice in this passage, *epi* with the accusative is properly translated "with." But, let's add I Corinthians 7:5. In the phrase, "may be together again," "together" is from *epi to auto*. It is *epi* with the pronoun, *autos*, both in the accusative case. It refers in this passage to the man and his wife being back *together*, one *with* the other. The same construction is also found in nine other places. That makes one verse where "with" is the translation twice and ten verses where *epi* with the accusative means, using brother Smelser's phrase, "in concert with." But, Brother Smelser says this is not possible!

Just how would brother Smelser have Mark 10:11 to read? Given his explanation of what it means, it would be thus: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another betrays his wife and causes her deep distress." Talk about changing the translation and injecting an hypothesis! I said in my first article that if some insisted on keeping "against" as the translation, it still wouldn't mean the put away woman was the antecedent. Using brother Smelser's language, does the man not "betray" and perpetrate a "fraud" on the woman he marries seeing that she thinks she has a right to be married to him when she does not? And, does the man not harm her by putting her soul in danger? As Bullinger said, in the quote above, "to be guilty of adultery by causing another to commit it."

### **Commits Adultery**

Brother Smelser says the following at the beginning of his article:

"There's no denying the man commits adultery with the second wife. But is that really what this passage is saying?"

He then spends his entire article trying to deny what he says is undeniable, and implies in his statement here that Mark 10:11 is *not* saying that a man commits adultery with the second woman. In his website article on Matthew 19:9, brother Smelser agrees that *moichatai* in that verse is continuous sexual relations. After quoting Nigel Turner as his authority, he says:

"...there is nothing left for the adultery to be other than the continuing sexual relationship with the second woman."

*Mark that statement well!* I won't take time and space to present the evidence that *moichatai* is durative, a continuing in adultery. That is not an issue in this discus-

sion seeing that brother Smelser accepts that to begin with. But, here is something else he says on his website about Matthew 19:9 that's very interesting:

“It is quite petty to argue that ‘commits adultery’ cannot be referring to the relationship between the man and the second woman because Jesus said the man ‘marries’ her. This, however, has been the claim of some who wish to liberalize Matthew 19:9.”

*Keep that quotation in mind!* Just substitute Mark 10:11 for Matthew 19:9 in it. Note also that he uses the word “with” as well as the phrase “relationship between the man and the second woman” to explain his point. Isn't that interesting? Surely he wouldn't liberalize Mark 10:11! Let's now move on to some facts about *moichatai* that *are* pertinent to this discussion.

*First, Moichao*, from *moichaomai*, is the verb translated “commits adultery” in Mark 10:11-12, Matthew 5:32b and twice in Matthew 19:9. These are the *only* places in the New Testament where *moichao* it is found and in *each place* it is the *same* exact grammatical form, *moichatai*.

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: (*moichatai*) and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (*moichatai*).” Matthew 19:9.

It should be obvious to everyone that *moichatai* means exactly the same thing in both parts of the verse. Brother Smelser has told us on his website that it means in the first part of the verse, “continuing sexual relations with the second woman.” It also must mean that the man who marries the put away woman is guilty of “continuing sexual relations” with the put away woman he marries. The same applies to Luke 16:18.

*Second*, Mark 10:2-12 is the exact same occasion as Matthew 19:3-9 and they are parallel accounts. It is quite common in parallel reporting of the same events or subjects to find one account giving details not found in the other. Notice:

hós án apolúsee teén gunaíka autoú kaí gameésee álleen moichátai, Mark 10:11.

hós án apolúsee teén gunaíka autoú kaí gameésee álleen moichátai, Matthew 19:9.

No one has to know Greek grammar in order to see that they are identical. I have left out the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 and the prepositional phrase in Mark 10:11 to demonstrate that not only the context of both passages shows a parallel event but the very structure of the language of Jesus is the same. We are viewing the same event, the same occasion, the same speaker, the same subject and the same language in both Matthew and Mark. Therefore, *whatever moichatai means in Mat-*

*thew 19:9 it means in Mark 10:11* and whatever it means in Mark 10:11 it means in Matthew 19:9. If it is “continuing sexual relations with the second woman.” in Matthew 19:9, it means the same thing in Mark 10:11

*Third*, whatever differing details are in one account must be supplied in the other to get the complete picture. Certainly, the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 must be injected into Mark 10:11. But, we must also insert the prepositional phrase from Mark 10:11 into Matthew 19:9. Thus, “whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery against her.” Matthew 19:9 and Mark 10:11 are exactly the same.

Further, the second part of Matthew 19:9 does not appear in Mark 10:11, either. That second part also has *moichatai*. The conjunction “and” between the first and second parts, along with the language used, shows that *moichatai* in the second part means exactly the same thing it does in the first part. Meaning the same thing, we must also supply the prepositional phrase to the second part. So, it should read:

“whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery against her; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery against her.”

So, whatever meaning we attach to Mark 10:11 must also apply to verse 12 and to Matthew 19:9. Further, it must also be supplied in Luke 16:18.

*Fourth*, “Maketh her an adulteress,” ASV, in Matthew 5:32 is from *moicheuo*. *Moicheuo* is the verb found twice in Luke 16:18. In the New American Standard, King James, Revised Standard and others, it is translated “makes her commit adultery.” The second part of Matthew 5:32 says, as in Matthew 19:9, “and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery (*moichatai*).” The conjunction “and” along with the language shows that *moichatai* means the same thing *moicheuo* does in the first part of Matthew 5:32. The exception clause is in Matthew 5:32 as in 19:9, so now add the prepositional phrase to these clauses just as we have in the other passages.

Whatever, *moichatai* and *moicheuo* mean in one of these pertinent passages, they mean in each of them. It means continuing unlawful sexual relations with someone that a person has no right to. This fact of continual sexual relations is readily seen in Romans 7:2-3. As long as the first man is alive and the woman is married to another man, she is an adulteress. If that situation exists for fifty years, then she is an adulteress for fifty years. That is what the durative present tense means in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

*Fifth*, words and phrases are to be taken in their literal sense unless something in the context *requires* that we understand a figurative meaning. Theorists have for a

long time on many subjects, including this one, changed the literal into figurative and figurative into literal to suit them. Where in the context of Mark 10:11 are we required to understand that *mochatai* is figurative?

*Sixth*, in every single instance of the man putting away his wife without the cause of fornication and then marrying another woman, he continues in unlawful sexual relations with her. There are no exceptions to that. Mark that well. *There are no exceptions!* Now, brother Smelser says that the clause means the put away woman is *distressed* by the man's adultery and that is what Mark is talking about. He defines *moichatai ep' autein* as betray/distress.

If brother Smelser is correct, *in every single case* of a man putting away his wife and marrying another woman, he is causing the put away woman emotional distress for as long as she lives and the second marriage exists. If that is fifty years, then the man is causing her the same kind and level of emotional distress for fifty years. But, I deny that in every single instance of divorce and remarriage that the put away party feels emotional distress. I personally know of some instances of divorce and remarriage where the put away party was relieved at being put away and cared nothing about whether or not the man remarried. And, if there is any emotional distress it would be when the woman was put away whether there was a remarriage on his part or not. Further, does not the man who puts her away "betray" her by breaking his vows to her? At the same time, with the current view that the remarriage of the man releases the put away woman so she can remarry without sin, she would more likely be really elated over his remarriage; she would be free to marry.

The position I mentioned at the beginning continues its evolution. It frequently changes as arguments are posted against it. Will its proponents eventually contend that "commits adultery" is a single act and not durative? That would remove their problem about the man's *continuing* to commit adultery "against" the put away woman for as long as his new marriage lasts. The next step after that, which some have taken in the past, would then be that all the man must do is repent of the single act of adultery and once forgiven can then be married without sin. After all, the first marriage is gone, the bond is broken and he is forgiven of his single act of adultery. What is to hinder him from being married to another? Consider the consequences of that.

## Conclusion

So, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, continues in unlawful sexual relations with her." That is simple, direct, understandable without human additions, hypotheses or speculations. And, first and foremost, it is the truth! Why don't we leave it there?

## Mark 10:10-12, A Second Response to Brother Barnett

By Jeff Smelser

Last fall, brother Barnett had two articles on Mark 10:10-12 published in *Gospel Truths*. I wrote a response that was published in the February, 2004 issue. In the same issue, a third article from brother Barnett was printed, this one in response to mine. Brother J.T. Smith, the editor of *Gospel Truths*, declined to print a second article from me, saying he wished to discontinue discussion of divorce and remarriage issues in his paper for the present time. However, there are a few things in brother Barnett's latest article that require comment.

### The Issue

The standard translations uniformly render the last two words of Mark 10:11 as *against her*. Apparently, brother Barnett feels that some doctrinal position he holds concerning divorce and remarriage is jeopardized by understanding *against her* to mean *against the first wife*. Because brother Barnett believes the words refer to the second woman, the woman in the adulterous relationship, he feels the need to explain how the adultery is *against* her. Of course, as he has noted, even a woman involved in such a sinful act is being wronged just as she herself is doing wrong. But brother Barnett is not sufficiently satisfied with that explanation to leave it at that. Instead, he has attempted to make the case that *against* might better be taken to mean *with*, the man commits adultery *with* her. The problem is, that's not what the English translations say. But brother Barnett wants us to believe that is what they might ought to say. He will not quite affirm it. But he wants us to be open to the idea. Remember, he wouldn't have this problem if he understood the words *against her* to refer to the first wife.

Let's be clear about one thing here: There is no disagreement between brother Barnett and me about the fact that the man does indeed commit adultery with the second woman. But brother Barnett wants us to believe that if the man commits adultery *with* the second woman, he can't be committing adultery *against* the first wife, and if he commits adultery *against* the first wife, he can't be committing adultery *with* the second woman. In Genesis 39:9, Joseph refused to lie with Potipher's wife saying, "How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" Had Joseph lain with Potipher's wife, wouldn't he have been sinning *with* her, and also sinning *against* God? Indeed he would have. And we might add that he would have been sinning against Potipher. Surely we have no difficulty in understanding that. That

should help us to understand how adultery can be both with someone, and against someone else.

But in Mark 10:11, the prepositional phrase *against her* is used to indicate only one of these facts. Brother Barnett belabors that point as if it is a point of disagreement. There is no disagreement between us on that point. The man commits adultery with someone, and he commits adultery against someone, but the prepositional phrase *against her* points to only one of these facts. Our disagreement is about which of these facts is indicated by the prepositional phrase.

### **Where we Stand at this Point**

I believe *against her* is the correct translation and the reference is to the first wife. But brother Barnett claimed that rules of Greek grammar demand we understand the reference to be to the second woman. Specifically, he first argued that “the closest substantive that agrees with the personal pronoun in gender and number is the antecedent.” That would mean “another,” i.e., the second woman, is the antecedent of the “her” in the phrase “against her.” However, as I demonstrated in my previous article, the nearest preceding substantive need not be taken as the antecedent of the pronoun. Context comes into play in identifying the antecedent.

In his latest article, Brother Barnett seems to have acknowledged that context will play a role in helping us to determine what the antecedent of a pronoun is, and that the nearest substantive agreeing with the pronoun in number and gender is not necessarily the antecedent. If that much is acknowledged, then the argument he made in appealing to alleged rules of Greek grammar regarding antecedents goes by the boards. Greek grammar does not require that the second woman be the antecedent of the pronoun in Mark 10:11. Greek grammar does not necessitate our understanding the verse to say the man commits adultery either with or against the *second* woman. If brother Barnett wishes to establish that this is what the verse means, he will need to build his case on something other than Greek grammar.

### **Variant Readings & Implications**

Brother Barnett makes one point that I can concede. I had shown that brother Barnett’s position would make verse 12 require that the second woman stay in her illicit, adulterous relationship. It would result in having Jesus say the man “*commits adultery with the second woman, and if she herself puts away her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.*” But brother Barnett notes that there is a variant reading in Mark 10:12 which replaces the intensive pronoun *herself* with the noun *woman*. If one were to believe that variant is the better reading, the particular point I made about the implications of Brother Barnett’s position would not hold.

My understanding of Mark 10:11-12 is consistent with either reading. However, I do not believe that the evidence for the variant reading advocated by brother Barnett is compelling. Brother Barnett seems to believe it is compelling. After noting that this is the reading of the so-called majority text and also noting that the King James Version incorporates it, brother Barnett says, “That is certainly correct because the pronoun in the Nestle text is referring to the wife of the first clause of verse 11.” I do not understand the logic of determining the legitimacy of a reading found in the so-called majority text on the basis of the meaning of a different reading in a different text. Perhaps I simply don’t understand what brother Barnett means to say here. In any event, it does not seem wise to me to be dogmatic about an interpretation of a passage that can only be sustained if one can assume the validity of a widely rejected variant reading.

Brother Barnett writes, “brother Smelser’s mistake is that he imagines that verse 12 *continues* the thought of verse 11. Rather, verse 12 is a *parallel* to verse 11.” Brother Barnett is simply mistaken about what I imagine. The point I made is that *his position* would require understanding the woman in verse 12 to be the second woman of verse 11, and unless he can hang his hat on the aforementioned variant reading, that is true. His only escape is to affirm that the reading found in the standard Greek text is wrong. And apparently, he is willing to do that. So not only is he willing to say the Greek text has generally been mistranslated in Mark 10:11, he is also willing to dispute the standard Greek text itself.

Well, there are times when we may have to question the legitimacy of a generally accepted translation, or even disagree with someone’s conclusion in the area of textual criticism. But again, I would be leery of becoming a dogmatic advocate of a doctrine that stands on two legs, one being that the standard translations are generally wrong (as brother Barnett is inclined to believe in verse 11) and the other being that the standard Greek text is wrong (as brother Barnett seems to argue in verse 12).

### **Brother Barnett’s Lexical Litany**

Brother Barnett reiterates his list of writers who concurred in supposing that *epi* can mean *with*, some of whom thought it might mean this in Mark 10:11 specifically. And while it may seem like an impressive list, we ought to give it a closer look.

Two of those he cites (Hanna, Marshall) merely refer to Turner. If brother Barnett wishes to shore up Turner’s argument, why not address the points I made in demonstrating the fallacy of Turner’s argument? After I have shown that Turner’s argument was based on the idea that “some in the early Christian period” spoke of *neighing* when they meant *committing adultery*, and after I have shown the fallacy in Turner’s reasoning that led to that conclusion, citing others who are simply basing their state-

ments on Turner adds nothing to the discussion. If brother Barnett thinks Turner's argument holds water, why doesn't he explain how *neighing* is synonymous with *committing adultery*?

Brother Barnett also reiterates his previous listing of some older lexica. He mentions the one by Bass. This was a small, rudimentary lexicon published in 1851. It was in fact pocket size. For *epi* with accusative meaning *with*, it cites only Heb. 8:8, a passage I'll deal with shortly. Brother Barnett also cites Henry Laing's lexicon. According to Laing himself, this was designed to be an "elementary work." It was primarily intended to serve as a guide to pronunciation with particular emphasis on vowel quantity. Beyond that its discussions truly are elementary.

He mentions a lexicon published by Robinson in 1825. That was the year that Robinson's "earliest effort in the department of New Testament Lexicography" was published. It was a translation of Wahl's *Clavis Philologica Novi Testamenti*. But then in 1836, Robinson published his own lexicon. Several revisions were made, and then a thorough revision and rewriting was done for an 1850 edition. I have not seen the 1825 work that brother Barnett cites, but brother Barnett says it affirms that *epi* with the accusative means *with* "after verbs which include the idea of alliance." If such was affirmed in the 1825 work, I can only conclude that Robinson thought better of that notion, for in the 1850 edition, that claim is absent.

Brother Barnett also cites a lexicon by Parkhurst. I consulted A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament by John Parkhurst, augmented by Hugh James Rose in a "new edition" (1829) with "works of some later writers." There is no mention of *with* as a meaning of *epi* with accusative. Perhaps brother Barnett is citing an earlier edition. If so, the claim that *epi* meant *with* didn't survive the process of revision.

The fact is, none of these works are considered standard works today. It should not go unnoticed that if some of these older works offered *with* as a meaning for *epi* with the accusative, that notion has not been reaffirmed in the modern standard lexicon. Nor should it go unnoticed that when Turner sought evidence for *with* as a meaning of *epi*, he felt the need to go back to Jeremiah, not admitting of any evidence for such a meaning in the New Testament whereby he could establish a basis for his theory in Mark 10:11.

In the foregoing remarks, I have not commented on all the works brother Barnett mentioned, but have only commented on those about which I have some knowledge and to which I have access. However, there remains one work cited by brother Barnett that demands consideration, for until recently it was considered the standard of New Testament lexicography. The current standard lexicon of New Testament Greek is an English translation and revision of Bauer's German work, now in its 3rd edition and titled A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian

Literature, published in 2000. It is often referred to as BDAG, for Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich. It recently supplanted the 2nd edition which was known as BAGD, published in 1979. With reference to the 2nd edition, brother Barnett writes,

In the Gingrich and Danker *Lexicon*, page 526, under the word, *moichao*, the authors give their opinion, and nothing more than their opinion, supporting the first woman as the antecedent. Yet, immediately following that comment, they consider Nigel Turner to be important enough to make reference to his 1956 article. They obviously did not consider that Turner should just be ignored.

And yet it is interesting that if you look up *epi* in this very same lexicon, you will find no support for brother Barnett's contention. There, you will find an extensive discussion of the use of *epi*, but you will find no hint that it can mean *with* when used with the accusative case. Regarding Mark 10:11 in particular, brother Barnett rightly notes that this lexicon does not endorse Turner's view - quite the opposite. On the page brother Barnett cites, where the verb for *commit adultery* is being discussed, it is noted that Turner's theory was predicated on associating Mark 10:11 with a phrase in Jeremiah 5. Again, I showed the fallacy of that association in my previous article. If brother Barnett wishes to continue to rely on it, why did he not address the points I made?

### **The Meaning of *epi***

In the end, the meaning of a word is not going to be determined by consulting a lexicon, but by coming to understand its use after seeing it in a multitude of contexts. This, after all, is what a good lexicographer does. With regard to *epi*, we need to do the same thing. That is, we need to demonstrate meaning by use.

And brother Barnett does put before us a couple of New Testament passages where he thinks *epi* with accusative means *with*, notwithstanding the fact that Nigel Turner supposed he would have to go to Jeremiah to find precedent for such an idea. Brother Barnett offers 1 Cor. 7:5, Heb. 8:8, and tells us he knows of nine other places that he could also cite, but does not. He will need those nine passages if they exist, because he is mistaken about 1 Cor. 7:5 and Heb. 8:8.

In 1 Cor. 7:5, brother Barnett has in mind the phrase, "may be together again," and from the word *together* brother Barnett infers the meaning *with*. The word *together* represents the Greek phrase, *epi to auto*. But *epi* is not translated *with*, nor is it understood to mean *with*, nor even is it, in and of itself, understood to mean *together*. Rather the whole expression *epi to auto* is translated *together*. Very literally, the translation would be *upon the same* with *place* being inferred. The husband and wife are to be *upon the same place* or *at the same place*, an idea that we aptly represent in English using the word *together*. Note well that *epi* remains true to its funda-

mental meaning, *upon*. It no more means *together* or *with* in this passage than does to (*the*) or auto (*same*).

epi to auto is an expression that occurs ten times in the Greek New Testament. The other nine occurrences are Mt. 22:34, Lk. 17:35, Ac. 1:15, 2:1, 2:44, 2:47, 4:26, 11:20, 14:23. I suspect these may be the other nine that brother Barnett has in mind. If so, then he has the same problem with all of them.

In Heb. 8:8, at least brother Barnett can point to English translations that actually use the word *with* where the Greek text has epi. But the fact that an English translation of a phrase may use the word *with* is not the same thing as saying epi itself means *with*. Brother Barnett needs epi to actually mean *with* to support his argument in Mark 10:11. BAGD, the lexicon that brother Barnett himself cites, lists 16 different categories of usage of this preposition with the accusative case, and the idea of *with* is not to be found among them. Many English glosses are suggested, including *on, upon, to, up to, toward, after, in the direction of, against, at, by, near, over, for*, etc. But not once is *with* suggested. Nigel Turner went all the way back to Jeremiah 5 in an effort to find support for such an idea because there is no support for it in the New Testament.

Then why do the translations say *with* in Heb. 8:8 if epi doesn't mean *with*? In the ASV, the text reads, "*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*" Though the Septuagint is quoted, the verb used in the Greek text represents a departure from the text as found in the Septuagint. The meaning of the verb used here is *to complete* or *to bring to accomplishment*. With the preposition epi, the idea is "*I will bring to accomplishment upon (for) the house of Israel and upon (for) the house of Judah a new covenant.*" (See Alford, Barmby, Milligan, Rienecker.) But translators have tended to render the whole phrase "make (a covenant) with..." Why this is done, I can only speculate. Perhaps it is to have the phrase conform more closely to the Masoretic text of Jeremiah. Or perhaps some translators have found the idea of *completing a covenant upon* someone foreign to our understanding of covenants and have therefore substituted the more familiar idea of *making a covenant with* someone, an idiom more familiar to us. In any event, as we saw in 1 Cor. 7:5, the translation of a phrase does not, in and of itself, prove anything about the meaning of an individual word. The point stands: Brother Barnett has yet to cite any New Testament passage where a case can be made that epi with accusative is generally understood to mean *with*. The standard lexicon of New Testament Greek, in its thorough treatment of the preposition epi, makes no allowance for the idea that the preposition could mean *with* when used with the accusative case.

Brother Barnett asks, "Just how would brother Smelser have Mark 10:11 to read?" The ASV, KJV, NAS, NKJB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, NLT and ESV all translate it so as to say the man who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery *against her*. At this point, I'm happy with that rendering.

On the other hand, I am not adverse to being convinced, on the basis of reasonable arguments, that Mark 10:11 should be translated differently. I mean that in all sincerity. But I would need to see credible evidence. The case brother Barnett has made for a different rendering is based on such things as fallacious claims about antecedents and Turner's novel idea that "some in the early Christian period" spoke of *neighing* when they meant *committing adultery*. And in his latest article, brother Barnett completely misunderstands the Greek expression *epi to auto*. This is the sort of case brother Barnett has made, and it is not credible.

Perhaps there yet remains a credible basis for arguing that Jesus really meant *with her* rather than *against her*. I am very doubtful of such a proposition both because of the unusual meaning it would impose upon *epi* and also because of the strange notion it would impose on verse 12, unless we could somehow justify the reading found in the so called majority text, and that itself seems unlikely. But if one is inclined to pursue the matter, perhaps a case more credible than brother Barnett's can be made based on the idea that the phrase in Mark 10:11 is a Semitism, a notion I mentioned in my previous article. The relevant literature is cited in the 3rd edition of [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament](#) edited by Danker. It seems to me there is sometimes excessive eagerness to identify things as Semitisms. Nonetheless, if someone wishes to make that case, I'm willing to listen. But if such an endeavor fails to yield a more credible basis for rejecting the rendering found in all the standard translations, and if the usual rendering presents a problem for someone's doctrine, then someone needs to reexamine his doctrine.

### **For the Record**

There is one other matter I would like to address in order to correct a misunderstanding. Brother Barnett penned the following: "Brother Smelser wrote in his original email to brother Smith that I was leaning 'on a bruised reed' in referring to Greek grammarian Nigel Turner." And then brother Barnett went on to speculate that I attempted to "discredit Nigel Turner." That is simply untrue. In a private e-mail to J.T. Smith, I referred to the article that appeared in *Bible Illustrator* in 1956 as a bruised reed. I did not refer to Nigel Turner as a bruised reed nor did I attempt to "discredit" Nigel Turner himself. Indeed, I closed my first response to brother Barnett by quoting from Nigel Turner whose statement contradicts Brother Barnett. While Turner supposed the text meant the man commits adultery with the second woman, he knew that nothing in Greek required that conclusion. In fact, he wrote, "It cannot be denied that the most frequent translation, *commit adultery against* (the first woman), is possible." This is where brother Barnett is at odds with Nigel Turner.

***A Final Word***

Discussions about divorce and remarriage have become very contentious. And yet for each person faced with a choice, it is all important to make a right choice. For this reason, the pursuit of truth is important, and worth all the energy we expend in studying God's word on the subject - as long as we are truly studying God's word. But when our efforts become exercises in ferreting out obscure theories that might shore up endangered positions, we ourselves are in danger of straying from the pursuit of truth. We are in danger of defending a creed.

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**SECOND RESPONSE TO BROTHER SMELSER****By Maurice Barnett****Foreword**

Because brother Smelser introduced that *Gospel Truths* will not publish a continuing exchange between us, I must explain the reason for the reader's benefit. It has always been the policy of *Gospel Truths* that if someone objects to an article in the paper, he gets one response and a rejoinder by the original writer. This policy was restated in the editorial column of the December, 2003 issue. Every paper with which I have been associated has had the same policy. Brother Smith has applied this policy fairly and uniformly. He has even published articles with which he disagreed, allowing a response followed by a rebuttal by the original author and no more. Further, brother Smith printed two articles from me and one from Willie Ramsey on Mark 10 within three consecutive issues and these were followed by brother Smelser's response and my rejoinder. No editor can just turn his paper over to an indefinite discussion like that. If anyone wants a lengthier discussion, he must do it elsewhere or in another format. What brother Belknap will do regarding our articles and his website is up to him. I thank him for his willingness to post these articles.

**Preliminary Remarks**

Brother Smelser accuses me of having some hidden position to uphold and that I am more concerned about that than I am with the truth. Here is what he says:

“Apparently, brother Barnett feels that some doctrinal position he holds concerning divorce and remarriage is jeopardized by understanding *against her* to mean *against the first wife*. Because brother Barnett believes the words refer to the

second woman, the woman in the adulterous relations, he feels the need to explain how the adultery is *against* her.”

Brother Smelser says it is “apparent” that this is what I’m doing but it is apparent only in his own mind. He has no basis on which to read my mind as to what I “feel the need” to do or not do. He later says:

“But when our efforts become exercises in ferreting out obscure theories that might shore up endangered positions, we ourselves are in danger of straying from the pursuit of truth. We are in danger of defending a creed.”

It has been my experience in debates that when someone attacks the motives and integrity of his opponent it means he is frustrated because he cannot handle his opponents arguments and, at the same time, he must try to prejudice the hearers or readers against his opponent so they will give no consideration to what he says. My conclusions come from my own study with a desire to know the truth. It has never been any different. Brother Smelser would do himself a service to present evidence for his position rather than question my character. But, there is more. He says:

“Remember, he wouldn’t have this problem if he understood the words *against her* to refer to the first wife.”

That works both ways: “Remember, brother Smelser wouldn’t have this problem if he understood the words “*against her*” to refer to the second woman.”

But, while we are on the subject, we ask brother Smelser: just what position are **you** trying to establish? Your articles and arguments are being used to support the position that the put away woman has the right, in some sense, to “put away” the man and remarry without sin **after** the man has first divorced her and married another woman. Be sure to tell us.

### What is he saying?

In reading brother Smelser’s material, any difficulty is not in answering his assertions and arguments but in trying to figure out just what he is saying. At the very beginning of his first article, he says:

“There’s no denying the man commits adultery with the second wife. But is that really what this passage is saying?”

That statement is a strong implication that Mark 10:11 is *not at all* saying that the man commits adultery with the woman he marries. Then in his last response, he says:

“Greek grammar does not necessitate our understanding the verse to say the man commits adultery either with or against the second woman. If brother Barnett wishes to establish that that is what the verse means, he will need to build his case on something other than Greek Grammar.”

This sounds like he is denying that “commits adultery” has anything to do with literal, sexual relations with the woman the man marries! This means that “commits adultery” has to be figurative *only* because the man cannot be committing *literal* sexual relations with the woman he divorced. But, then he says:

“Let’s be clear about one thing here: There is no disagreement between brother Barnett and me about the fact that the man does indeed commit adultery with the second woman.”

Now it is the other way around. The man does indeed commit adultery with the second woman. But, brother Smelser is not finished. Notice:

“But brother Barnett wants us to believe that if the man commits adultery with the second woman, he can’t be committing adultery against the first wife, and if he commits adultery against the first wife, he can’t be committing adultery with the second woman.”

Here he is contending for two definitions of “commits adultery.” One is literal, physical, durative sexual intercourse with the second woman. The other is some sort of figurative sexual intercourse with the woman he divorced. But, there is more. Note:

“The man commits adultery with someone, and he commits adultery against someone, but the prepositional phrase *against her* points to only one of these facts. Our disagreement is about which of these facts is indicated by the prepositional phrase.”

Now it is adultery with the second woman based on “commits adultery” but is figurative because of the prepositional phrase, “against her.” Recall that he said, “Remember, he wouldn’t have this problem if he understood the words *against her* to refer to the first wife.” So, it is not “commits adultery” that refers to the first woman but the prepositional phrase, “against her.” Brother Smelser, do you really understand what you are talking about?

I have already shown, in previous material, that Matthew 19:9 and Mark 10:11 are parallel accounts. I have also shown that *moichatai*, commits adultery, is literal, durative, unlawful sexual relations between a man and a woman in every place it is found in the New Testament; it cannot be both literal and figurative at the same time. At this point, we will look at brother Smelser’s splitting up the clause “commits adultery against her” and see just what the grammar tells us.

### Sentence Structure

Apparently, brother Smelser insists that the preposition *epi*, *cannot possibly mean* “with,” and that the phrase, *against her*, absolutely *must* refer to the put away woman. He says:

“Brother Barnett seems to have acknowledged that context will play a role in helping us to determine what the antecedent of the pronoun is.....”

Brother Smelser, I have insisted on context from the beginning. I have discussed context from the first article. I have asked more than once just where does the context of Mark 10 *require* that we understand *epi* with the accusative to mean “against?” Where does the context *require* that “her” *absolutely must* refer to the first woman? I have yet to get an answer to those questions while brother Smelser has treated us to nothing but assertions. He just claims that his conclusions are true but presents no evidence. Here is one of his statements already mentioned above:

“Greek grammar does not necessitate our understanding the verse to say the man commits adultery either with or against the second woman. If brother Barnett wishes to establish that this is what the verse means, he will need to build his case on something other than Greek Grammar.”

As stated above, I have already shown the meaning of *moichatai* to be literal sexual relations from the parallels with Matthew 19:9 and Luke 16:18. We know that *moichatai*, “commits adultery,” refers to literal, durative (continuous) unlawful sexual relations with a woman because of its *grammatical form*. We know that it is not an intransitive verb because one does not commit adultery by himself; it must be “with” someone. It is thus transitive. The literal adultery cannot be with the put away wife because that relationship is broken. The only one with whom he can be practicing the continuous adultery is the second woman, the one he marries. Simple grammar, brother Smelser. What was it you said? We can’t understand that the man commits adultery either with or against the second woman from the grammar?

We get a view of brother Smelser’s handling of grammar by his interpretation of the clause “(he) commits adultery against her.” Fitted in among his other statements, he tells us that “commits adultery” refers to the second woman and the prepositional phrase “against her” refers to the put away woman. He also insists that we must consider the context and then he destroys the context by breaking up and rearranging the sentence. I made the following points of grammar in my previous article but brother Smelser observed the passover. So, I will expand on that material now and it’s going to involve grammar, which brother Smelser says doesn’t prove anything. Well, we’ll see.

*Prepositions* originated as adverbs. In *koine* Greek, they join the object of a preposition with an antecedent of the preposition. This is true in both Greek and English. William Mounce in his book, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, (an up-to-date, current, Greek grammar) page 55, 56 says, relative to a preposition in English:

“A preposition is a word that indicates the relationship between two words. In the sentence, ‘The book is *under* the table,’ the preposition ‘under’ describes the relationship between ‘book’ and ‘table,’ which in this case is a spatial

relationship.....The function of a preposition in Greek is the same as English.”

William B. Wallace in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pages 356-7 (another current and widely used Greek grammar), says,

“Prepositions show how the verb connects to various objects....the accusative and dative are usually connected to a verb and the genitive is usually connected to a noun.”

Other Greek Grammars say the same thing. Since the function of prepositions is the same in English as in Greek, we will add the following information. It is from *The English Sentence, A Grammar of the English Language* by Jonathan Rigdon. This book was the English grammar used for many years at Freed-Hardeman College. The following is from pages 157-8.

“Prepositions are relation words, and relation implies two objects. There are, therefore, always two terms of the relation expressed by a preposition. These two terms are object and antecedent. *The object is the substantive governed by the preposition. The antecedent is the term to which the preposition joins the substantive .... The object of a preposition is always a substantive.* It may be, a noun, a pronoun, an adverb, an adjective, an infinitive, a participle, a clause, a phrase ... *The Antecedent of a preposition is the word the phrase limits.* It may be a verb, a noun, a pronoun, an adjective, an adverb, an interjection.”

Let’s apply this to our sentence in Mark 10:11. “(he) commits adultery against her.” In word order, this is the exact counterpart of the Greek phrase, *moichatai ep’ autein*. The *object* of the preposition is “her.” The *antecedent* of the preposition is the verb, “commits adultery” (*moichatai*) “Commits adultery” and “her” are joined together by the preposition.

The action of “commits adultery,” *moichatai*, carries over by means of the preposition to the object of the preposition, “her.” The pronoun is feminine, singular. It can apply only to one person. The action of the verb, “commits adultery,” applies only to that one person and no other. Seeing that “commits adultery” refers to literal, durative sexual intercourse, which brother Smelser accepts, it can only refer to the woman with whom he is having that sexual intercourse and that is the second woman, the one he marries.

Regardless of what English word translates *epi*, whether *upon*, *in reference to*, *against*, *regarding* or *with*, the object of the preposition is the one who is linked directly to the verb. The “her” of Mark 10:11 is directly involved in the durative sexual relations. And, that means the second woman. It is just elementary grammar, brother Smelser, Greek or English.

At the same time that brother Smelser is splitting up the sentence, as we just noted, he turns around and contends for dual definitions of terms. He says:

“But brother Barnett wants us to believe that if the man commits adultery with the second woman, he can’t be committing adultery against the first wife, and if he commits adultery against the first wife, he can’t be committing adultery with the second woman.”

I want the reader to notice how brother Smelser slips and slides around on the clause. He first denies that commits adultery refers to the woman the man marries, then he splits the sentence and makes “commits adultery” refer to the woman the man marries and “against her” to the woman he divorced. Now he wants to define “commits adultery” to mean literal sex with the second woman and figurative with the first one.

Brother Smelser uses Joseph and Potiphar’s wife to prop up his contention. He thinks he has a passage that proves he can split up the sentence (first one way and then another) in Mark to apply to both women. He says:

“In Genesis 39:9, Joseph refused to lie with Potiphar’s wife saying, ‘How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?’ Had Joseph lain with Potiphar’s wife, wouldn’t he have been sinning with her, and also sinning against God” Indeed he would have. And we might add that he would have been sinning against Potiphar. Surely we have no difficulty in understanding that. That should help us to understand how adultery can be both with someone, and against someone else.”

Notice brother Smelser’s attempt to get two meanings of the same act by using the word “sin.” That is, Joseph “sinned” with the woman and “sinned” against God which is supposed to give us two meanings of the word “sin” in keeping with what he wants to establish in Mark 10.

First, Potiphar’s wife kept after Joseph, saying, “lie with me.” That meant have literal, sexual intercourse with her. Notice that there is a verb, “lie,” a preposition, “with,” and an object of the preposition, “me.” “Lie” is tied to “me” by the preposition and it refers to no other person than Potiphar’s wife.

We can fine tune that even more. “Commit adultery with me.” “Commit adultery” is the verb, “with” the preposition and “me” the object of the preposition who was only one person, the one who received the action of the verb. Sounds like Mark 10:11, doesn’t it?

Second, it would be a “sin against God” because “sin is the transgression of law.” This underlies every rule God has made whether it is stated or not. *Inherent in the word “adultery” is “sin against God.” It is the nature of the word itself.* But, we know this because the Bible tells us *specifically* that violating any law of God is sin; that defines “sin.” Further notice, “sin” is the verb, “against” is the preposition and “God” is the object. The sin in this statement is directed only against God.

Now, let’s apply this again to Mark 10:11, “(he) commits adultery against her.” “Commits adultery” is *unlawful*, literal sexual intercourse, which is the verb in the

sentence. “Against” is the preposition that ties the *unlawful*, literal sexual intercourse to the object of the preposition, “her.” Potiphar’s wife said, “lie with me.” Injecting any other person into that sentence *requires that he or she be specified*. Potiphar’s wife did not acknowledge God and so Joseph introduces Him into the matter by adding “and” sin against God. In order to get another person to begin with, the first wife in Mark 10:11, into “commits adultery against her,” requires that she be specified. To put the divorced woman into the verb, *moichatai*, is nothing but imaginative assumption. To put her into the preposition, *epi*, is nothing but imaginative assumption. To put her into the pronoun, *autein*, is nothing but imaginative assumption. I ask again, where does the context *require* brother Smelser’s contention?

To illustrate the point, look at Mark 9:13. “But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as it is written of him.” “Is written” is the verb followed immediately with *ep’ auton*, *epi* with an accusative personal pronoun, “of him.” The preposition ties the verb and object of the preposition together. Jesus focuses only on the Old Testament writings that referred to a single person, John the Baptist. Were there things written in the Old Testament about any other individuals? Certainly. Jesus and Judas come to mind, but they are not contained in the above statement Jesus made; we must go to *other* passages to find that information. In the same way, any doctrinal consequence regarding the put away wife in “commits adultery against her” must be found in some passage other than Mark 10 because that verse does not say it.

Regarding antecedents of pronouns, brother Smelser continues with nothing but his assertions. When there are two eligible antecedents to a pronoun, the nearest substantive is to be considered the antecedent. Exceptions to that occur when the context *requires* we understand the remote substantive as the antecedent. But, there *must be some compelling reasons* why we *absolutely must take the remote substantive*. I have asked before and still ask: Where in the context of Mark 10:11 are we *required* to take the remote substantive as the antecedent when the nearest substantive fits the context, and the truth, very well? I’m still waiting for brother Smelser to answer that. I have presented grammatical evidence that the woman the man marries is the antecedent of the pronoun.

Brother Smelser refers to the Majority Text as the “so-called majority text,” a belittling expression. To him, these texts and any translations from them are non-standard, substandard, inferior or the like. If interested, I suggest that the readers obtain material on both sides of the controversy over texts and make their own judgments. Brother Smelser has identified himself as siding with *one wing* of modern scholarship and wants to be our advisor on what texts and translations will be acceptable. He wants to tell us what is the “Standard” for inspired texts and what translation we must look to. I’m not willing to accept that.

Brother Smelser criticizes the documents and text behind the King James and Majority Text in favor of those based on the Vaticanus and Alexandrian manuscripts. In view of his preference for these manuscripts, and their derivatives, I want him to explain to all of us if he believes that the last twelve verses of Mark, including Mark 16:15-16, should be stricken from our New Testaments. We might add, to these deletions, enough words, phrases and verses of the New Testament that take up the same space as first and second Peter. Since he is going to tell all of us what texts and translations make up the inspired word of God, we need to know what we should believe, preach and practice and what we shouldn't. If he tells us that he accepts the inclusion of those "deleted" verses as genuine New Testament, then his prejudice against the Receptus and Majority Texts means nothing. A maybe yes, maybe no won't do. Which is it, brother Smelser? We want to know.

### My "Lexical Litany"

This is what brother Smelser calls all of the lexical scholars that I have brought as witnesses to the varied meaning of *epi*. The word "litany" as used by brother Smelser means "a tedious recital." I'm sure he does consider it tedious, seeing that he doesn't agree with them. Brother Smelser made no comment on the Brown and Comfort Interlinear, based on the UBS Greek text where they use "with" in Mark 10:11. Nor did he deal with Zondervan's Interlinear based on the Nestle text. Nor did he say anything about Bullinger's Lexicon. Perhaps these were just oversights.

Speaking of oversight, I do want to point out James Strong. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Hebrew-Greek Dictionary* is one of the most widely used reference works in the world today. A large number of other books are cross-referenced to Strong, using his numbering system for Bible research and study. Brother Smelser probably won't consider it a "Standard" work but other moderns do. I have the latest edition, the "New" Strong's published by Thomas Nelson Publishers. In the Publishers Preface, they say:

"Comprehensive Hebrew and Greek Dictionary improvements include: new enlarged type; hundreds of corrections and updated entries, including corrections of outright errors, inconsistencies, variant readings, and syllabification of pronunciations; consistent abbreviations throughout; clarification of obscure terminology; and updated, reader-friendly introductions."

That sounds pretty up-to-date to me. And, what does Strong's say under *epi* (#1909) with accusative? Strong lists "with" among the uses. We are going to come back to Strong's shortly when we talk about Nigel Turner to see what else Strong's has to say on our subject.

I am going to show through the rest of this article that my “litany” of lexicons are vindicated and his “Standard” authorities are the ones that fall short of the facts.

**Bass:** Brother Smelser says of Bass’s Manual Lexicon that it was “a small rudimentary lexicon published in 1851. It was in fact pocket size.” So, his point must be that we should dismiss what Bass says because he considers it just “rudimentary,” very small in size, that little tiny book. So, must we conclude that Bass was either ignorant or lied when he used “with” as one application of *epi* with accusative?

As a point of fact, the pages of Bass’s Lexicon were just three inches by four and three-quarters inches in size. The print was extremely small so that it could be published as a pocket edition that people could easily carry around with them. That was a testimony to its popularity. At that, there were 246 pages in it! If the type was increased to a 12 or 13 point font, it would have made a large volume. In the introductory remarks of this Lexicon, it says:

“While every thing has been retained which adapted it to the wants of the mere learner, the author has aimed to accommodate it also (as far as its limits would permit) to the use of those whose perusal of the sacred volume is more critical and discriminating. The careful distribution of the definitions into separate heads, the references to passages in which words are used in peculiar acceptations, and the examples quoted of unusual combinations of language, will in this light, he trusts, be regarded as improvements, and, with others, render the work more extensively useful.”

Bass was very careful and thorough in his scholarship as well as physical structure of the volume. He does not deserve any “put down.”

**Laing:** Brother Smelser says about Laing, “According to Laing himself, this was designed to be an ‘elementary work.’ It was primarily intended to serve as a guide to pronunciation with particular emphasis on vowel quantity. Beyond that its discussions truly are elementary.” My, my. What is “elementary” must be unreliable if not totally false if we are to understand brother Smelser’s statement at all. Brother Smelser is a teacher of Greek. He has a website and offers courses for a fee. Does brother Smelser teach elementary Greek? Surely that is where he starts with new students. I wonder if he tells them that the “elementary” Greek that he teaches them is not really reliable because it’s elementary? What brother Smelser has overlooked in Laing’s Preface is the following:

“Though much was to be supplied from his own researches, the Author is anxious to acknowledge his obligations to former writers of whose labours he has made free use, particularly Stephens, Scapula, Schleusner, Parkhurst, Leigh, Matthie, &c., in the grammatical part.....”

Laing’s work was much more than just pronunciation. It also dealt with grammar and word meaning. Was Laing ignorant or dishonest in listing “with” as an application of *epi*?

**Robinson:** Brother Smelser says that the 1825 edition of Robinson's Lexicon was his first effort and was just a translation of Wahl's *Lexicon*. From that point alone, I suppose, we are to reject the 1825 Robinson. However, brother Smelser adds that by the 1850 edition that Robinson had learned better and dropped the word, "with," from his lexicon. But, brother Smelser overlooks some things. Apparently, he just doesn't know the facts.

First, Wahl has always been considered an outstanding lexicon of N.T. Greek. Second, Robinson said in the introduction to the 1825 edition:

"In translating from a language in which the significations of the words are in most cases so general as in the Latin, there is a great difficulty in seizing the exact shade of meaning, and expressing it in an English definition. Hence it became necessary to recur constantly to the original Greek, and to form the definitions from the Testament itself, rather than from the very general Latin definitions either of Wahl or Schleusner. This, of course, caused a great amount of additional labour; but the value of the work, it is hoped, will be found increased in at least an equal proportion."

Third, brother Smelser asserts that Robinson "thought better" of his using "with" for *epi* with the accusative by his 1850 edition and removed it. For those who are familiar with Robinson, they recognize in him the same thing that has happened with a number of men as they get older; they also tend to become liberal in their attitude toward the Bible. This was the case with Robinson. On pages 118-119 of his 1850 edition, he says that "baptism" cannot refer to "full immersion" because, in his thinking, there wasn't enough water in Jerusalem to baptize thousands of people in one day. That is a silly liberal idea that isn't in the 1825 edition where he just said that baptism was immersion. In 1850, page 791, Robinson said that "psallo" meant singing "as accompanying stringed instruments." That's another liberal idea that isn't in the 1825 edition. Does brother Smelser think that Robinson "thought better" in regard to baptism and singing in worship as he got older?

After saying this, I do recognize that no lexical writer is without mistakes, but the basis on which brother Smelser discusses them is without merit.

**Parkhurst:** Brother Smelser does indeed cite a revision of Parkhurst made by Hugh Rose, a revision that was extensively changed by Rose to suit himself. Parkhurst was dead by the time Rose published his "new edition." I was citing the original work by Parkhurst. Parkhurst, to my knowledge, is the only linguist who independently wrote a major lexicon on both the Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek. Both works were outstanding. I quote first from the introduction of his second of four editions of his Hebrew Lexicon, which is indicative of his careful attention to his work, and the second quotation is from the first of three editions of his Greek Lexicon:

“Now, in fixing the leading sense of each Root, after carefully and constantly consulting the ancient versions (I mean those of the LXX and Vulg. together with the Chaldee Targums, and the fragments of the Hexaplar versions of *Aguila*, *Symmachus*, *Theodotion*, &c. published by *Montfaucon*), I have endeavoured as much as possible to let the Holy Scriptures, on a diligent and close examination and comparison of the several texts, speak for themselves, well knowing that *nothing cuts a diamond like a diamond*.”

“All I can say for myself in these respects is, that I have honestly and conscientiously done my best, nor have I knowingly and wilfully misrepresented a single word of expression, nor paid a regard to the opinions of any man, or number of men whatever, further than they appeared to me agreeable to the sacred Oracles, and to the analogy of the Greek Tongue.”

Parkhurst was very careful in writing his Lexicons, and regardless of what a *later editor* did to his work, Parkhurst listed “with” as a meaning of *epi* with the accusative.

**Nigel Turner:** Brother Smelser claims that I have staked my “case” on antecedents and Nigel Turner. That’s nothing but wishful thinking on brother Smelser’s part. As I said in my last article, I am not interested in defending Turner. He was just *one* of many linguists that I cited. I also said that they cannot be brushed aside as of no consequence.

But, brother Smelser has said that he has made a deep study of Turner on this point. This is why brother Smelser has made such an issue of Turner. Also, according to brother Smelser, all of the linguists who agree with Turner, such as Hanna and Alfred Marshall, can be dismissed because Turner is wrong to begin with and, therefore, they are wrong. While brother Smelser deals primarily with *epi* in the Septuagint, it is the Hebrew preposition, *el*, that is the center of controversy. In view of his insistent pursuit of this matter, I think it is necessary to point out some facts that brother Smelser does not tell the reader.

The Hebrew preposition in Jeremiah 5:8, is “*el*.” The word is a multifaceted word in meaning, just like its counterpart, *epi*, is in Greek. It is variously translated. Among the possible applications is “with,” just like “*epi*” in the New Testament. I’m going to present yet another “litany of lexicons” and other authorities for brother Smelser, which he won’t like, but they should have meaning for the reader. These bear on the Hebrew Old Testament.

Among the Hebrew Lexicons that give “with,” as a meaning for *el*, in the range of applications in the Old Testament are the following: *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* of over 1500 pages by Julius Fuerst, Third Edition, p. 88. *Hebrew and English Dictionary* by W.L. Roy, p. 29. *Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary* by Alexander Harkavy, p. 24. *Langenscheidt’s Pocket Hebrew Dictionary*, by Dr. Karl Feyerabend, p.16. Of

those Lexicons that also say that it means “together with” are the following: Gesenius, translated by Edward Robinson, p. 51. Gesenius, translated by Samuel Tregelles, p. 47. Brown, Driver, Briggs, p. 40, #413 with Strong’s numbering. Benjamin Davies, revised by Edward C. Mitchell, p. 38. And, let’s not leave *Strong’s Dictionary* off the list. Under *el* (#413), Strong’s lists “with,” just as he does under *epi*.

Further, Genesis 4:8 translates *el* in “Cain talked with Abel” in the KJV. *The Hebrew-English Interlinear* by J.P. Green, also translates “with” in Genesis 4:8. In Lamentations 3:41 it is “with our hands” in the KJV and ASV. In Daniel 11:23 it is “the league made with him.” In the KJV, ASV and NASV.

The exact same range of possible meanings attach to both *el* and *epi*. In Jeremiah 5:8, *el* in Hebrew is *epi* in the Septuagint. There is thus, after all, a foundation for Turner’s contention on that passage and on Mark 10:11. And, there was enough evidence for Hanna and Marshall, and no doubt others, that they agreed with him, enough so that they put it into print. But, let’s cut to the chase.

### Hebrews 8:8

Brother Smelser has contended that not only does *epi* not mean, in any sense, “with” or “in concert with” in Mark 10:11 but has denied that there is *any place in the New Testament where it means any such thing*. Here is what he said in his first response to me, followed by another in his second response:

“What context could we imagine wherein the root idea upon would in effect end up meaning with, i.e., in concert with? In fact, there is no other NT passage where *epi* is understood to mean such a thing.”

“Brother Barnett has yet to cite any New Testament passage where a case can be made that *epi* with accusative is generally understood to mean with. The standard lexicon of New Testament Greek, in its thorough treatment of the preposition *epi*, makes no allowance for the idea that the preposition could mean *with* when used with the accusative case.”

What brother Smelser has formed is what is called in logic a “Universal Negative” expressed in a proposition as “none are.” That is written out this way: “No verse in the New Testament uses *epi* with accusative to mean ‘with’ or ‘in concert with’.” That is a *universal negative proposition*. Brother Smelser has staked his entire position on that universal negative. All of his assertions, his “Standard” works, his criticism of my “Litany of Lexicons” and his position on Mark 10:11 are all based on that universal negative.

In the logical square of opposition, it takes only one contradictory to prove a universal negative to be false. In fact, there is more than one such passage in the New Testament but we will focus on Hebrews 8:8 at this point.

“But God found fault with the people and said: ‘The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.’” NIV

It reads the same in the King James, New King James, American Standard, New American Standard, New American Standard Update (1995), Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, The New English Bible, Today's English Version, and so on. In this “litany” of translations are some of brother Smelser’s “Standard translations” based on his “Standard texts.” The Greek text has *epi* with the accusative and it is translated specifically the way it could not possibly be, *according to brother Smelser*.

What does brother Smelser have to say about Hebrews 8:8. Well, just take a look at the maneuvering and suppositions he presents to get around it. Just look at the backflips he takes, jumping first one way and then another, to get “with” deleted from Hebrews 8:8! Shame on him. He is doing the very thing he claims others do plus *he completely abandons all he wrote at the beginning about sticking with the “Standard” works*. Let’s look at some of the things brother Smelser says.

“In Heb. 8:8, at least brother Barnett can point to English translations that actually use the word *with* where the Greek text has *epi*. But the fact that an English translation of a phrase may use the word *with* is not the same thing as saying *epi* itself means with. Brother Barnett needs *epi* to actually mean *with* to support his argument in Mark 10:11.”

Here is a reference I gave in my last article. It is from A.T. Robertson in his monumental grammar, page 602:

“In personal relations hostility is sometimes suggested though *epi* in itself does not mean ‘against.’”

Perhaps Robertson is not “Standard” enough for brother Smelser but Robertson stated the fact there. “With” is just as much a meaning for *epi* as is “against.” I don’t have to prove that “with” is inherent in *epi* in order to understand that *epi* means “with” in some passages. According to brother Smelser’s logic, he must prove that “against” is inherent in *epi* before that can be used in some passages. There is a list of varied applications of *epi*. Brother Smelser makes rules for others that he doesn’t follow himself. But, here is something else he says:

“Brother Barnett asks, ‘Just how would brother Smelser have Mark 10:11 to read?’ The ASV, KJV, NAS, MKJB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, NLT and ESV all translate it so as to say the man who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. At this point, I’m happy with that rendering.”

I wonder why brother Smelser has the King James in that list? Since it is quite old and based on the Receptus text, he doesn’t think it is a “Standard” translation and thus of no value; he has to throw that one out. Anyway, I can just as well say:

“The KJV, NKJV, NIV, ASV, NASV, NASVU, RSV, NRSV, TEV, NEB, Amplified Bible and Young’s Literal all translate so as to say that God made a covenant *with* the house of Israel and *with* the house of Judah. At this point, I’m happy with that rendering.”

That works just as well for me as it does for him. And, I have more translations in my list than he has in his. But, here is a real gem from him about Hebrews 8:8:

“Though the Septuagint is quoted, the verb used in the Greek text represents a departure from the text as found in the Septuagint. The meaning of the verb used here is *to complete* or *to bring to accomplishment*. With the preposition *epi*, the idea is ‘*I will bring to accomplishment upon (for) the house of Israel and upon (for) the house of Judah a new covenant.*’ (See Alford, Barmby, Milligan, Rienecker.) But translators have tended to render the whole phrase ‘make (a covenant) with....’ Why this is done, I can only speculate.”

Then brother Smelser launches into speculation. Now, let’s just use his gymnastics with the verb while using the preposition in the “Standard” translations.

“*I will bring to accomplishment with* the house of Israel and *with* the house of Judah a new covenant.”

That makes sense. Here is another translation of this passage made by Louw and Nida in their *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 13.88. This is surely a modern “Standard Lexicon.” True to the text and clearly stated, it says:

“I will bring into existence a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.”

Has the reader noticed that brother Smelser has not only retranslated *epi* with the accusative to get rid of the meaning “with” in this passage but he has also *retranslated the verb* to try to accommodate the change in prepositions so it will all conform to his position? All of his attempts to get around the passage just will not work. After everything is said and done, all of what he called my “Litany of Lexicons” were right and his “Standard” references are the ones that are mistaken.

Here is a question that needs answering. With so many translations, from the King James to the most recent versions, all of them translating *epi* with the accusative in Hebrews 8:8 “with,” why have brother Smelser’s “Standard Lexicons” failed to include “with” as a possible meaning under *epi*? I’m not going to speculate on that but somebody goofed and brother Smelser has based his universal negative on their mistake.

## Together

Brother Smelser says: “Brother Barnett completely misunderstands the Greek expression *epi to auto*. This is the sort of case brother Barnett has made, and it is not credible.” So, brother Smelser then tells us the following:

“In I Cor. 7:5, brother Barnett has in mind the phrase, ‘may be together again,’ and from the word together brother Barnett infers the meaning *with*. The word *together* represents the Greek phrase, *epi to auto*. But *epi* is not translated *with*, nor is it understood to mean *with*, nor even is it, in and of itself, understood to mean together. Rather the whole expression *epi to auto* is translated together.”

Yes, brother Smelser, I have been aware all along that the phrase *epi to auto* is what is translated “together.” But, how in the world did *epi* with an accusative pronoun become a *stock phrase* meaning “together” if *epi* with an accusative *never* has even a particle of the meaning of “with?” I will remind brother Smelser again of what he said in his first article:

“What context could we imagine wherein the root idea upon would in effect end up meaning with, i.e., in concert with?”

“Together” means “in concert with,” which he, himself, says is the meaning of “with.” According to Webster, one meaning of “together” is “with each other” and that means the same thing as “in concert with.” Let’s look at 1 Corinthians 7:5 to see what it says:

“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency.”

This is talking about stopping sexual relations for a short while, a voluntary abstinence, to give each other time for prayer and spiritual uplifting. *Nothing is even implied that either of them would be leaving the house; they are still in the same place* as far as the text says. Look at the passage. “Be together again” (*epi to auto*) is a euphemism for sexual intercourse. They are shortly to resume sexual intercourse lest they be tempted to wrongdoing because of continued abstinence. And, sexual intercourse is something that one only does “with” another. Further, in other passages, to come together “in one place” still means something people do “with” each other. After all, one person, alone, does not “come together in one place” by himself.

Now, with all of brother Smelser’s maneuvering, Hebrews 8:8 and I Corinthians 7:5 contradict his universal negative which means it is false. My “Litany of Lexicons” were correct. In some places, *epi* with the accusative means “with.”

### Concluding Thought

I want brother Smelser to remember the two questions I asked him to answer. (1) Is it your position that after a man’s unlawful remarriage that his divorced wife can then “put him away” and remarry with God’s approval? (2) Are the last twelve verses of Mark 16, including verses 15-16, along with numerous other words, verses and phrases, a part of the New Testament or must they be deleted as uninspired? Don’t forget. We want to know.

## A Final Note in Response to Brother Barnett

By Jeff Smelser

The one new idea that brother Barnett introduces in his latest article has to do with the Hebrew preposition used in Jer. 5:8. In examining that word, he supposes he finds “a foundation for Turner’s contention on that passage and on Mark 10:11.” As you may recall, Turner’s endeavor was to show that *epi* with accusative could mean *with*, and he offered as evidence the Greek text of Jeremiah 5:8. It’s a long way from the Hebrew preposition in Jer. 5:8 to the meaning of Jesus’ words in Mk. 10:11, a distance not even Turner tried to traverse.

But let’s look at it, keeping in mind that I know significantly more about Hebrew than does my dog, and she could even be Jewish, having shown up here as a stray from who knows where. In any event, venturing warily into the world of Hebrew with my meager skills, as best I can tell, the preposition in Jer. 5:8 is a word that generally means *to* or *toward*. The rendering found in the KJV, is “everyone neighed *after* his neighbor’s wife.” Most translations describe them as neighing *after* or *for* their neighbors’ wives. *After, for, to* - each of these words is used to bring to mind the stallion that neighs to get the attention of a mare. He calls *to* her, not *with* her. I don’t know of a translation rendering it so that the neighing is *with* a neighbor’s wife. Regardless of what Brother Barnett may learn about the range of meanings encompassed by this Hebrew word in various passages, an argument from the Hebrew aimed at establishing *with* as a meaning of *epi* at Jer. 5:8 in the Septuagint would have to be based on the use of the Hebrew word *in Jer. 5:8*. And in Jeremiah 5:8, in Hebrew as in Greek, the text speaks of men as horses neighing *to*, not *with*, the wives of their neighbors. I’ll invite someone who knows more about Hebrew than my dog and I do to comment more definitively on the Hebrew word. But whatever may be said about the Hebrew preposition as used in Old Testament passages other than Jer. 5:8, it’s not going to change the meaning of the Greek text of Mk. 10:11.

Aside from this Hebrew argument, Brother Barnett breaks no new ground. He argues against a *figurative adultery* idea, but I have not and do not advocate such in Mk. 10:11, and I think anyone who reads what I have written will be able to see that. He again hammers home an understanding of the function of a preposition, a point that is not in dispute.

He tries to salvage the relevance of his referenced 19th century lexicographers, and simultaneously mocks the best of them. If an early edition supported his theory, he is confident it was superior to the revised edition that did not. And what of 20th century works? He faults the two editions that have been the standard of New Testament Greek lexicography for the past twenty-five years, saying, “somebody goofed,” because they do not support his theory.

He also endeavors to shore up his arguments from 1 Cor. 7:5 and Hebrews 8:8. Regarding these particular passages, I am content to leave what I have written and what he has written before the readers. But regarding the notion that we can expect to readily find passages in the New Testament supporting brother Barnett's proposal for the meaning of *epi* in Mk. 10:11, consider this: Nigel Turner's effort to make the case involved a convoluted argument from Jeremiah 5:8 comparing the phrasing there with that found in Ps. of Solomon 8:10 and based on speculation that "some in the early Christian period regarded the verbs *moicaomai* and *cremetizw* (= *neigh*, *js*) as practically synonymous." Wouldn't it have been far easier to point to one of the passages brother Barnett cites? The point is, they don't show what brother Barnett thinks they show.

Brother Barnett refers to the Greek dictionary in the New Strong's Concordance published by Nelson. A careful reading of the entry for *epi* will show that, contrary to brother Barnett's assertion, Strong does not include *with* among the meanings of *epi* with accusative, or for that matter, among the meanings of *epi* at all. By convention, Strong listed in italics the meanings for each Greek word, using a colon to mark the end of the listing of meanings. Thereafter he cited all the different English renderings found in the KJV, whether or not the English and Greek were similar in meaning. These are not in italics. For example, for *legw*, Strong cited "shew" as a rendering because in 1 Cor. 15:51, the KJV has "I shew you a mystery." Of course, *legw* does not mean "shew." Regarding *epi* with the accusative case, Strong offered only *toward* and *upon* as meanings, while indicating there are other nuances by means of "etc." Then comes the colon, and thereafter the section Brother Barnett cites. Brother Barnett is referring to the section that is not intended to be a listing of case specific meanings, but of KJV renderings.

Brother Barnett wants me to answer two questions. He writes:

I want brother Smelser to remember the two questions I asked him to answer.

(1) Is it your position that after a man's unlawful remarriage that his divorced wife can then "put him away" and remarry with God's approval?

My response: No.

(2) Are the last twelve verses of Mark 16, including verses 15-16, along with numerous other words, verses and phrases, a part of the New Testament or must they be deleted as uninspired? Don't forget. We want to know.

My response: I hate to disappoint brother Barnett, but I really am not sure what to make of Mk. 16:9-20. However, there is nothing I teach that is established only by means of Mk. 16:9-20, and therefore, while brother Barnett's question is one I would like to be able to answer definitively, the uncertainty of the text there does not present a practical problem for me. What that has to do with the topic at hand, the reader may guess.

Brother Barnett's latest article did enlighten me on one point - the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard was "Potiphar," rather than "Potipher" as I had spelled it. I would also like to note that in my second article, there is an omission in the list of passages where we find the expression *epi to auto*. All the chapters and verses are cited, but the last two (11:20, 14:23) should be designated as being in 1 Corinthians.

I am satisfied with the exchange at this point and intend to allow this brief response to serve as the conclusion to the exchange for my part. I thank brother Barnett for his responses to the remarks I have made.

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## Concluding Remarks on the Discussion

### By Maurice Barnett

Brother Smelser has unilaterally concluded our exchange. That is his decision. I thank him for his time and energy in making these articles possible. Discussions of this sort can only help all of us in the understanding of Truth. I also give my thanks to brethren Jeff Belknap and Tim Haile for their willingness to post these articles on their websites.

I encourage the readers to pay close attention to the previous articles on both sides and weigh what is said, reaching your own conclusions based on the evidence. Yet, because some things brother Smelser says in his concluding remarks, I feel compelled to clarify some facts. Brother Smelser has kindly indicated that I would probably have some concluding remarks.

(1) In brother Smelser's reference to Strong's Dictionary, he says:

"A careful reading of the entry for *epi* will show that, contrary to brother Barnett's assertion, Strong does not include *with* among the meanings of *epi* with accusative, or for that matter, among the meanings of *epi* at all. By convention, Strong listed in italics the meanings for each Greek word, using a colon to mark the end of the listing of meanings."

Well, the fact is, that a "careful reading of the entry for *epi*" in Strong's will show that the word, "against," is *after the colon and is not in italics, either*. Yet, both words are found in our translations, as we have seen in the preceding material. Further, under *el* in Strong's, the Hebrew counterpart of *epi*, "*with*" is italicized and "against" is not. The reader can draw his own conclusions in view of brother Smelser's argument.

(2) As for a meaning of figurative adultery, the reader can judge for himself what brother Smelser argued. I pointed out in the beginning of my last article that the main difficulty with brother Smelser was in figuring out what he was saying. Now he

clearly says that *moichatai* is not used figuratively at all in Mark 10:11, only literally. Please go back and read the section in my last article on “sentence structure,” to which he gave no response. One reason for writing my first two articles was as a reaction to the position that made *moichatai* both literal and figurative at the same time and place, literally with the second woman and figuratively with the first. It is now clear that brother Smelser does not agree with that position and yet does not agree with me on the passage. So, I am still not certain just what he does believe on Mark 10:11.

(3) I think the case has been clearly made in regard to my “Litany of Lexicons” and the reader can easily judge the matter. Hebrews 8:8 has given brother Smelser a great deal of trouble, from which he has not extricated himself.

(4) I asked brother Smelser two questions in my last article, to which he has responded. I asked first, “Is it your position that after a man’s unlawful remarriage that his divorced wife can then ‘put him away’ and remarry with God’s approval?” He clearly said, “No!” I am pleased to know that. I originally wrote my first two articles to counter the use of Mark 10:11 to prove that position and now brother Smelser agrees that Mark 10:11 does not prove it. Perhaps his response to my articles was only an academic exercise for him. However, the exchange has been profitable in that it shows there is no proof in Mark 10:11, either in English or in Greek, for a woman divorced without cause, on the remarriage of her former spouse to then “divorce” him and remarry. Brethren who take that position must turn elsewhere for support. It seems to me that there is no other source to which they can turn.

My second question concerned a good portion of the New Testament that must be deleted based on the texts that brother Smelser insists are the standard. He is evasive in his answer but it appears to me that he sides with the modern liberals on that subject. The reason for my asking this question is given in my last response. I also am satisfied with the exchange and commend it to the readers for further study and contemplation.

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*Posted on MarsList*

Attempts to use Heb. 8:8 as evidence that Mk. 10:11 really means “commits adultery *with her*” - Two passages that have bearing:

Dan. 4:33 (Theodotian)

Ezek. 13:15 (LXX)

**Jeff Smelser to some who may be interested,**

Some have lately argued that in Mk. 10:11, *moikatai epiv aujthn* should be translated “*commits adultery with her*,” meaning *with* the second wife, rather than “*commits adultery against her*,” meaning *against* the first wife. In order to support this view, some of them have energetically sought another passage where *epiv* used with the accusative case as in Mk. 10:11, means *with*. Over the course of the past six months one or two of them seem to have settled on Heb. 8:8 as the best hope.

I have previously discussed Heb. 8:8 and have shown the fallacy involved in using that passage to prove *epiv* means *with*. But I recently came across another passage that ought to be considered by anyone who yet supposes Heb. 8:8 justifies revising the translation of Mk. 10:11. I was reading the Theodotion text of Daniel in the latter part of chapter 4, and at verse 33 I came across the following:

*auth/th/wra/ollogos suntel esqh epiv Naboucodosor*  
*in that very hour the word was accomplished upon Nebuchadnezzar*

Just as in Hebrews 8:8, here we have the verb *suntel ew* used with the preposition *epiv*. It is aorist passive here, whereas in Heb. 8:8 it is future active. Nonetheless, the point should be clear: *suntel esqh epiv in Dan. 4:33 (Th)* means *was accomplished upon*, and *suntel esqw epiv in Heb. 8:8* means *I will accomplish upon*.

*suntelesw epi oikon israhel kai epiv ton oikon iouda diaqhkhv kainhn*  
*means I will accomplish upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah a new covenant.*

This emboldened me to look for passages in the LXX where *suntel ew* is used with the preposition *epiv*. In Ezek. 13:15 I found the following:

*kai suntelesw ton qumon mou epiv ton toixon kai epiv tou- ajleifonta- aujton* and I will accomplish my wrath upon the wall and upon those who plaster it

Here we have the same form of the verb as is used in Heb. 8:8, and on the whole the construction is parallel:

*I will accomplish my wrath upon the wall and upon those who plaster it* (Ezek. 13:15)

*I will accomplish a new covenant upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah* (Heb. 8:8)

This is not to say *epiv* has exactly the same contextual force in these two passages. In fact, in Ezek. 13:15, *epiv* could well be translated *against* as it is in most

translations at Mk. 10:11, whereas this would be precluded by the context in Heb. 8:8. But the fundamental meaning *upon* is present, both in Ezek. 13:15 and in Heb. 8:8, as well as in Mk. 10:11.

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## **Response** **to the above argument by Brother Smelser on Hebrews 8** **by Maurice Barnett**

Dear Jeff,

Thank you for sending your material. I had already received it about an hour before you sent it to me. It came from a third party who took it from Marslist where you had already posted it. You say in your article, “For a more thorough discussion of the translation of Heb. 8:8, see my article at ...(biblebanner website).” That sounded so important and final! After all, a “thorough discussion” from you on this should settle the issue. On reading that statement, I thought you had written a whole article on Hebrew 8:8 without my knowing about it, so I went to the address you listed to see what it is about. But, the “thorough discussion” is just the two paragraphs of assertions in your second response to me. That is a long, long way from being thorough. I then responded to your “thorough discussion” in my second article and, at that point, you abruptly stopped the discussion. So, your “discussion” turned out to be neither thorough nor important.

Since you single me out by name in your article, I am assuming that all of your comments involve me. You may have some others in mind, but I am certainly included and so I will respond accordingly. To begin with, you say—

“In order to support this view, some of them have energetically sought another passage where *epi*, used with the accusative case as in Mk. 10:11, means *with*. Over the course of the past six months one or two of them seem to have settled on Heb. 8:8 as the best hope.”

You had to resort to a passage in the Septuagint and another in the obscure Theodotian Text, a text produced by a single individual to revise the Septuagint. It appears to me that you are the one who “has energetically sought” some passage to support your view that *epi* never means “with.” Obviously, you want people to think that your “opposition” has been desperately scrambling around for the past six months to find some evidence to oppose your “impregnable” position. You wish! Jeff, you pervert the facts and that does you no credit.

In our discussion, *you* were the one who introduced the subject by insisting that *epi* with the accusative *never means with*, in spite of the numerous Lexicons, linguists and translations I pointed to that have said otherwise. You challenged me to produce a passage where *epi* meant “with.” Here is what you said—

“Brother Barnett has yet to cite any New Testament passage where a case can be made that *epi* with the accusative is generally understood to mean with.”

You were not even aware of Hebrews 8:8, or *the other passages* I introduced in response to your challenge. It is obvious to me from your response that you were surprised to know they were there. Now you are wanting people to believe that over the past few months your opposition has been scrambling around for such a passage and have finally settled on Hebrews 8:8! Jeff, what you have said is not the truth about me nor anyone else that I know of.

Second, your article *title* is misleading at best and deceptive at worst. It reads - “Attempts to use Heb. 8:8 as evidence that Mk. 10:11 really means ‘commits adultery with her.’” Heb. 8:8 has only been used as evidence that *epi* with the accusative *can mean* “with.” From the beginning of my writing on Mark 10, I contended that “with” was the better translation of Mark 10 because of the grammar, not because of Hebrews 8:8. Further, here is what I said *in my very first article in Gospel Truths, before we ever had our exchange—*

“From the above information, the phrase could as well be translated, commits adultery *with respect to her*, commits adultery *with her*, commits adultery *upon her*, commits adultery *concerning her* or commits adultery *toward her*. In keeping with Bullinger and others, who say it *could* imply any intention *either for or against*, it could be translated as ‘commits adultery *for her*,’ that is, *commits adultery in order to have her*. With other possible meanings of *epi* with the accusative, to insist on translating it as ‘against’ sounds more like forced interpretation by translation. The text does not *require* ‘against’ as the proper translation.”

In both my responses to you, Jeff, I showed the proper grammatical construction of the clause. It is a grammatical form that is true in both Greek and English. *Moichatai*, commits adultery, is the *antecedent* of the preposition, *epi*. The pronoun, *her*, is the *object* of the preposition. A preposition is a *relational word* that ties the verb and the object of the preposition together. There is only one woman in the clause and she is represented by the pronoun, *her*. The verb is transitive. The *action* of the verb is transferred to the object of the preposition. This is just basic grammar, Jeff. You and I both agree that “commits adultery” refers to actual sexual intercourse. So, literal sexual intercourse is the action of the verb that is transferred to the object of the preposition, the pronoun, *her*. This means that whoever the pronoun, *her*, refers to is the one with whom he is having literal sexual relations. That means the pronoun refers to the woman he marries and not to the put away woman because

he is not having sexual relations with the put away woman. But, the preposition that best describes the active nature of literal sexual intercourse is “with,” seeing that one does not have literal sexual intercourse by himself. It is done only “with” another. Until you show where this is in error, all your maneuvering on *epi* means nothing.

This last article from you manufactures a false issue, nothing but a strawman. It changes nothing. Did you not read what I said in my articles and in our exchange? As I just quoted above, I said that *epi* with the accusative can, in some contexts, mean *upon, on, with regards to, etc.* To find a passage in the Septuagint and in the Theodotian Text, even with *sunteleo*, that means other than “with,” means nothing in regard to Hebrews 8:8. The contexts and meanings are different and I will show you that here.

I have no basic objection to either of the passages you cite from the Septuagint and Theodotian texts. The Hebrew text of Daniel 4:30 uses the Hebrew preposition “upon.” The human translator of the Theodotian text decided to use *epi* with the accusative to express it. Since *epi* with the accusative can express “upon,” the Theodotian text is in keeping with the Hebrew text. However, I don’t know why you wanted to use the Theodotian text seeing that the same reading is in the Septuagint. That isn’t strange, either, since the Theodotian is based on the Septuagint. The Hebrew text of Ezekiel 13:15 likewise has the word that means “upon.” I have no objection to that being expressed by *epi* with the accusative. But, that is still no evidence at all concerning Hebrews 8:8.

You said the following in our exchange—

“Though the Septuagint is quoted, the verb used in the Greek text represents a departure from the text found in the Septuagint. The meaning of the verb used here is *to complete* or *to bring to accomplishment*. With the preposition *epi*, the idea is ‘*I will bring to accomplishment upon (for) the house of Israel and upon (for) the house of Judah a new covenant.*’ (See, Alford, Barmby, Milligan, Rienecker.) But translators have tended to render the whole phrase ‘make (a covenant) with...’ Why this is done, I can only speculate.”

Jeff, which is it, “upon” or “for?” Those two terms don’t mean the same thing and neither of them mean the same thing as “with.” “Upon” and “for” mean that we are *passive* in regard to the covenant. “With” means we are *active*. That’s a crucial difference.

You *admit* that translators have uniformly translated *epi* as “with” in Hebrews 8:8. Well, perhaps they knew something that you don’t know or something that you are just unwilling to accept. You say that you can only speculate on why translators have put “with” in Hebrews 8:8. I don’t think it takes any speculation as to why because the Bible gives us the understanding. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of Jeremiah 31 and was the “translator” of the Hebrew text into the Greek of Hebrews

8. He stated it there as He pleased. Any “dissimilarities” or “similarities” with the Septuagint are purposely there by the Spirit’s own wisdom; the Spirit was not bound by a human translation.

First, the section in Hebrews 8:8-10 is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-33. So we will begin with Jeremiah. Here are the pertinent sections from the English translation.

“make a new covenant *with* the house of Israel and *with* the house of Judah.”

Verse 31.

“the covenant that I made *with* their fathers.” Verse 32.

“the covenant that I will make *with* the house of Israel.” Verse 33.

In the four places that the English word, “with,” is found, it is translated from the same specific Hebrew preposition that means just that, “with,” Brown, Driver and Briggs *Hebrew Lexicon*, page 85, point II, says the word means, “prep. *with*.” On page 86, point (d) it says, “of intercourse of different kinds *with* another, e.g. after verbs of making a covenant or contract...” BDB does not cite Jeremiah 31 in this place but does point to Genesis 15:18 that says “God made a covenant with Abram,” which is the same as Jeremiah’s prophetic statement. BDB also cites Jeremiah 34:13, God says— “I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.”

Further, the English word, “make,” in all three passages above also comes from the same Hebrew term. It is combined as part of the word that means *to make a covenant*. BDB, p. 503, says it means to “cut or make a covenant” and cites Jeremiah 31:31-33. The verb in these passages is *the same in each verse* and the preposition is *the same in each verse*. In each passage, the Hebrew text specifies the meaning, “make a covenant with.”

Now surely, Jeff, you are not trying to tell us that the same Holy Spirit that transmitted this revelation to Jeremiah and then later to the writer of Hebrews, changed His mind between the transmission to Jeremiah and then to Hebrews so that the two accounts *mean something different*? You are telling us that the Holy Spirit changed the active nature of the covenant to a passive one?

Hebrews 8:8-10 is not just an *explanation* of Old Testament *figurative language* but a *quotation* from the text of Jeremiah 31:31-33, translated from Hebrew into Greek by the power of the Holy Spirit. Since Jeremiah was given hundreds of years before that of Hebrews, the Hebrew text of Jeremiah is the standard against which the Greek text of Hebrews 8 is to be judged. So, let’s look at Hebrews 8 now.

“I will make a new covenant *with* the house of Israel and *with* the House of Judah.” Verse 8,

“...the covenant I made *with* their fathers.” Verse 9.

“...the covenant I will make *with* the house of Israel.” Verse 10.

This is in perfect agreement with the English translation of Jeremiah, as it should be. But, more importantly it must agree with the Hebrew text of Jeremiah as translated into Greek. Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is the translator here, not some humans. In the above passages of Hebrews 8, the Holy Spirit said the same thing with different verbs and different prepositions.

Jeff, you leaned heavily on *sunteleo*, insisting on “accomplish” as the meaning. “Accomplish” is just one word that can translate *sunteleo*. I will say some more about this in a moment when I get to the prepositions. But, here is Louw & Nida Lexicon, (13.88), on *sunteleo*— “to cause to exist by virtue of its having been finally accomplished - ‘to cause to exist, to accomplish.’..... ‘I will bring into existence a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah’ He 8.8.” Note how they translate Hebrews 8:8. W.E. Vine, under the heading of “End”(c), says of *sunteleo*, “to effect, make, Heb. 8:8.” I fail to see what is wrong with “make” as an English translation of the word because *sunteleo* does mean “make” as much as it does “accomplish.” Since Hebrews 8:8 is in fact Jeremiah 31:31 where the verb means “make,” then we must accept “make” as the meaning of *sunteleo* in Hebrews 8.

Second, in Hebrews 8:9, the verb is *poieo*, instead of *sunteleo*. But, *poieo* means “make.” Here is Louw & Nida, (13.9), “to cause a state to be - ‘to cause to be, to make to be, to make, to result in, to bring upon, to bring about.’” But, seeing that the verb in Jeremiah 31:32 means “make,” we must accept that it is the proper word to translate *poieo* in Hebrews 8:9. So, *poieo* is an inspired translation of the Hebrew.

Third, in Hebrews 8:10, the verb is *diatithemi*. Louw & Nida, (34.43), says— “to make a solemn agreement involving reciprocal benefits and responsibilities - ‘to make a covenant, to covenant together, making of a covenant.’... ‘this covenant which I will make with the people of Israel’ #Hebr 8:10... ‘and of the covenant which God made with your ancestors’ #Acts 3:25...” So, the word refers to “making” a covenant. The word for “covenant,” *diatheke*, is a derivative. Both *diatheke* and *diatithemi* are found in this passage. That is why it is translated “made” a “covenant.” But, since the verb in Jeremiah 31:33 means “make,” that is how we are to understand *diatithemi* in Hebrews 8:10.

But here is another interesting fact. In the Septuagint, (Jeremiah 31 is actually chapter 38 in the Septuagint), *in all three passages*, the word for “make” is *diatithemi*. That follows the Hebrew text seeing that the same Hebrew verb means “make a covenant” is in all three verses. I think we can safely say that *diatithemi* is an inspired Greek counterpart to the Hebrew word for “make” in Jeremiah. This is no doubt the reason why the Septuagint translators used it in verses 31-33 so we don’t have to speculate about those translators.

*Sunteleo* means the same thing that *poieo* and *diatihemi* mean—it means “make.” They are synonyms here. Now to the prepositions.

First, let’s begin with verse 10 and work backwards. The preposition “with” in this verse is contained in the dative case of the noun “house.” The Septuagint also has the preposition contained in the dative case *in all three verses of Jeremiah*. The preposition “with” is found in the dative case, whereas the *Hebrew text* has a distinctive preposition meaning “with” *in all three verses*. I must conclude that the dative case of the noun is the source of the specific preposition, “with” in Hebrews 8.

Hebrews 10:15-16 relates to this as well. Verse 15 tells us that this is the Holy Spirit bearing witness in quoting Jeremiah 31:33, verse 16. It has the verb, *diatithemi*. But, found here is the preposition *pros* in the accusative. Among its meanings in the accusative is *with, in company with*. Louw & Nida, (90.58), says, “a marker of an experiencer of an event, with the implication that the participant may then be in some dyadic relation - ‘with, to.’ ... ‘the covenant which God made with your ancestors’ Ac 3.25.” A “dyad” is something that consists of two parts or individuals in a joint relationship. “God made a covenant with...” *Pros* expresses that exactly here. Acts 3:25 is the same construction.

Second, verse 9 is the same as verse 10. The preposition *with* is contained in the dative case of the noun.

Third, verse 8 must conform to and harmonize with the Hebrew text and with verses 9 and 10. But, verse 8 uses *epi* in the accusative case. *Sunteleo* must mean the same as *poieo* and *diatithemi* and *epi* must mean “with” as in the dative case in the other two verses in order to conform to the prophecy and the context. We thus have an inspired translation by the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew text. It is translated correctly into English in both Jeremiah and Hebrews and means “make a new covenant with.” That determines that *epi* with the accusative means “with” *in this context*.

This is why I said that your translation of “upon (for)” perverts the meaning of the passage. God has made a covenant *with* us as *active* participants, not passive. That is what the Holy Spirit said in Jeremiah and what He said in Hebrews.

Now, I granted in my second response to you that *sunteleo* does mean in places, *accomplish*. If we rendered Hebrews 8:8, “I will accomplish a new covenant with the house of Israel,” it would still make some sense, but the Hebrew and Greek terms as discussed above focus on the word “make” and “with.”

So, by expressing the quotations in words that are different forms but the same in meaning, the Holy Spirit enriched His revelation. Hebrews 8:8-10 has been translated into English correctly and parallels Jeremiah 31:31-33 exactly. You see, Jeff, we haven’t had to speculate as to why the translators used “with” for *epi* in verse 8. The Bible has explained it for us. You have yet to make your case on *epi*.

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## Rejoinder by Jeff Smelser

Dear Maurice,

You wrote,

That sounded so important and final! After all, a “thorough discussion” from you on this should settle the issue.

No, my comments on Heb. 8:8 are not the last word, nor do I think I indicated such. What I wrote was, “For a more thorough discussion of the translation of Heb. 8:8, see my article at [www.biblebanner.com/articles/mdr/mk10\\_2nd.htm](http://www.biblebanner.com/articles/mdr/mk10_2nd.htm).” And I do consider the discussion therein to be more thorough than the few remarks I sent to you and others most recently. What I sent you most recently focused on the very narrow matter of ἑπι with ἐσθ (the Greek font did not register on the email at this point. See his article for an explanation of what this refers to. MB) as used in two other passages.

You wrote,

Jeff, you had to resort to a passage in the Septuagint and another in the obscure Theodotian Text, a text produced by a single individual to revise the Septuagint. It appears to me that you are the one who “has energetically sought” some passage to support your view that *epi never* means “with.”

and a bit later, you wrote,

I don’t know why you wanted to use the Theodotian text seeing that the Septuagint says the same thing.

Obscure or not, it happened to be what I was reading. It wasn’t a matter of wanting to use the Theodotian text. I was reading the Theodotian text of Daniel 4 for other purposes - I don’t remember what in particular - and I happened to come across the phrase that was similar to the one in Heb. 8:8. That made me think it would be interesting to do a search of the LXX and see if I might find other such examples. I opened the LXX in MS Word, partially entered the two words using wild cards to allow for variations of *suntel ew*, and thus I found the occurrence in Ezekiel. (As I think about it now, I realize there might be additional occurrences that would not have turned up in my search because I think I failed to allow for elided iota.) Having become aware of two examples of *suntel ew* with *epi* just as we see in Heb. 8:8, I have made the information available to you and others.

In any event, the Theodotian text and the LXX do not say the same thing. In the Theodotian text, the heavenly pronouncement is followed by a third person description of its fulfillment in the words, *auth/ th/ wra/ o/ logos suntel esqh epi Naboucodonosor, kai apov twn ajqrwpwn ejediwcqh kaij corton w- bou-*

hšqien..., whereas the corresponding passage in the LXX is a first person description with no reference to the immediacy of the fulfillment. In the LXX, the heavenly pronouncement is followed by the words, εἶπεν Naboucodonosor basileu- Babulwno~ εἶπεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπέδραμον κορτον ἡ βουὴν εἰς τὴν μέσην με... The point of view is different, the vocabulary is different, and in particular, notice that *suntel esqh epivis* not found in the LXX version of the events.

As far as the end of our exchange was concerned, twice now you have suggested I ended it prematurely. With each article I wrote, I intended it to be my last. After I wrote my third article, there was nothing left on the table as far as I was concerned. You were continuing to make certain assertions, but I was satisfied that my previous remarks had adequately addressed them and felt no need to reiterate what was already before the readers.

Prior to my 3rd article, it had been suggested to you by another that I should have the last word inasmuch as you had already written four articles as compared with my two. After you wrote your second response to me (your fourth article on the subject) and sent it to Tim Haile, he wrote to you (and copied me) on March 2 saying,

Maurice, is it your understanding that if I publish this latest response from you, that brother Smelser should be allowed to respond to it? I want to be fair. You wrote the first article(s), so it seems to me that Jeff should write the last.

In response, I sent a note to you, Tim, and Jeff Belknap the same day (March 2) saying,

Tomorrow, I plan to send what I expect will be my final article in this exchange. I can tell you now, it is short. At the moment, it is 902 words, and I may delete a paragraph. Tim, I do think it is fair that my article conclude the discussion for the very reason you suggested, but I will not be troubled if brother Barnett should choose to write further on the topic.

I sent my 3rd and final article to Tim Haile and Jeff Belknap for publication on their respective websites. Thereafter, you chose to write another article (your 5th article on the subject and 3rd in response to me), and as I said, I saw nothing therein that necessitated my departing from my stated intention of letting my 3rd be my last. Given that I was willing to allow you the last word, I don't think it is to your credit that you now try to make it appear that the absence of a 4th article from me suggested any inadequacy in my arguments.

Perhaps at some time in the future, I can give some consideration to your ideas on the various verbs used in the Hebrews 8 quotation from Jer. 31.

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## Response to Jeff Smelser

Dear Jeff,

In regard to our exchange some months ago, we were not in a formal debate so there were no preconditions set. You and I had never talked about how long the discussion would last and certainly *had no agreement regarding who would have the last say*. On March 2 of this year, you and I both got an email from Tim Haile. Here is what he said. It reflects nothing but his own opinion—

*”Maurice, is it your understanding that if I publish this latest response from you, that brother Smelser should be allowed to respond to it? I want to be fair. You wrote the first article(s), so it seems to me that Jeff should write the last. ... Let me know what you want to do. And, Jeff, I would also like to hear from you regarding this.”*

Here is my response to Tim on the same date—

*”Tim, nothing has been said by either Jeff or myself about ending the discussion. As far as I am concerned, we will continue until one or both of us have decided we have covered the subject and bring it to an end.”*

Now you tell me that *“With each article I wrote, I intended it to be my last.”* But, you did not share your intention with me until you abruptly quit with a short conclusion. The discussion was not complete regardless of what you thought and that is proven by the most recent exchange we just had on Hebrews 8:8, *which you initiated*. I don’t care how much you write on this subject or any other, but don’t be surprised if I respond to it. In spite of your complaining about it now, it is a fact that it was your decision to bring our former discussion to an abrupt halt. It was “abrupt” because it was an *unexpected end* to the discussion. *That’s what “abrupt” means, Jeff*. You may have been through with me but I wasn’t through with you. Then, on the same date as above, you wrote to Tim with a copy to me—

*“Tim, I do think it is fair that my article conclude the discussion for the very reason you suggested, but I will not be troubled if brother Barnett should choose to write further on the topic. And in fact, if you should for some reason feel the need to post more of his material on your website in response to what I have written (if for example you feel that something he writes is compelling, and in the interest of truth you desire to post it) I would of course have no objection. I will leave that up to you.”*

Note what you said: *“...but I will not be troubled if brother Barnett should choose to write further on the topic.”* Why is it that you are troubled about it now? Because of what you said, I wrote the following in my brief response to your closing statement—*”Brother Smelser has kindly indicated that I would probably have some concluding remarks.”* Further, you said that if I had something *“compelling, and in the*

*interest of truth...I would of course have no objection*” to it being posted. You said some things in your closing remarks that were not true and needed attention drawn to them, “*in the interest of truth.*” So, that’s what I did. *Now, you have an objection to what you before said that you did not object to.* If you had wanted to, you could have written another short or long response to my closing statement. That was your choice, just as it was your choice to quit the discussion. But, don’t complain as though I have mistreated you.

The fact is, you *did not expect me to respond to your first article.* Here is what you said— “*with each article I wrote, I intended it to be my last.*” Of course, that intention was true of your very first article. When you sent J.T. that first article, he sent a copy to me. At that point you and I talked on the phone. You told me that you had sent a response to J.T. and I told you that I knew that because I had a copy. You seemed surprised at that; you said, “you do?”. But, your surprise was even more evident when I told you I was writing an answer to it. You said, in a surprised tone, “Oh, you *are*?” It appeared to me at that moment that you thought that you had so demolished my arguments that I wouldn’t be able to answer you. That is what you have expected all along in each of your articles, thinking that each one would be your last because you had finished me off. I have news for you. It is my judgment that you not only think you should have the last word but whatever you write IS the last word on the subject. More on this in a moment.

This last short piece you sent out on the texts and Hebrews 8 that I responded to, of itself demonstrates that our discussion was not over as you claim. In that piece, you said some things that were not true, some things that were accusations against the character of those who disagree with you and some things that you only claimed were evidence when in fact they were a waste of time and effort. In addition, you connected my name to it. You posted your article on a preachers list and then sent it to several others in addition to me; I don’t know how much further it’s gone. Whether or not to respond to such an article was my right to decide..

Now to your text argument. Both complete copies of the Septuagint I have in my possession are just called “Septuagint” or “LXX.” They both say *suntelesthe* in Daniel 4. You said the *Septuagint* doesn’t say that and my Septuagint does say it. I know there is an alternate version of the text that says *telesthesetai* but I care absolutely nothing about running down the rabbit tracks of textual criticism or which version is correct. Both *telesthesetai* and *suntelesthe* come from *teleo*. Both forms have the same basic meaning. What difference does it make regarding our contention on *epi* with the accusative? The meaning is the same in each instance whether it is Hebrew, Theodotian or your Septuagint. When I said the texts are the same on this passage, I was referring to the specific phrase involving *epi* in the accusative. *When* the event was fulfilled in each text changes nothing. You continue to make distinctions with-

out differences.

However, I do want to thank you for your detailed emphasis on the differences in context, point of view and purpose between the texts you refer to. I made the same observation on the difference between the passages you brought up in Daniel/Ezekiel as compared with Jeremiah 31/Hebrews 8. I have contended all along that *epi* with the accusative means different things in different contexts and is translated accordingly. The contexts of the Daniel and Ezekiel passages you introduced are far removed from being parallel with Jeremiah 31:31-33 in Hebrew, Septuagint and English. Both verbs and prepositions are different between Daniel/Ezekiel and Jeremiah 31 in Hebrew, Septuagint and English. Hebrews 8:8-10 must conform to the meaning of Jeremiah 31:31-33 and it does, whether Jeremiah is read from Hebrew or Septuagint. You see, the context, point of view, purpose and vocabulary of Hebrews 8:8-10 is not the same as that of Daniel/Ezekiel in either the Hebrew or Septuagint. There is where your attempted parallel fails.

Now, to one last matter. You have the audacity to say, *“I don’t think it is to your credit that you now try to make it appear that the absence of a 4th article from me suggested any inadequacy in my arguments.”* There are two things that stand out in that statement.

First, do you realize just how arrogant that sounds? It’s so unthinkable that anyone would have the nerve to even suggest that *your* arguments were inadequate! *By your own admission*, you were convinced that just one response from you to my articles would settle the issue. Thus, I shouldn’t have responded because the arguments in your very first article were *fully adequate* to establish I was wrong. However, the very fact that I responded to you shows that I did not think your arguments were adequate and neither do many other people think they are. Perhaps you think that anyone who disagrees with you is making a personal attack on your abilities.

Second, let me remind you of your accusations in the second article of our previous discussion—

*“Apparently, brother Barnett feels that some doctrinal position he holds concerning divorce and remarriage is jeopardized by understanding against her to mean against the first wife. Because brother Barnett believes the words refer to the second woman, the woman in the adulterous relations, he feels the need to explain how the adultery is against her. .... But when our efforts become exercises in ferretting out obscure theories that might shore up endangered positions, we ourselves are in danger of straying from the pursuit of truth. We are in danger of defending a creed.”*

That accuses me, not of inadequacies of argument, but of moral *dishonesty*. In addition, your strong implications in your last piece on Daniel/Ezekiel is another accusation of dishonesty directed toward those who disagree with you. You say—

*“In order to support this view, some of them have energetically sought another passage where epi, used with the accusative case as in Mk. 10:11, means with. Over the course of the past six months one or two of them seem to have settled on Heb. 8:8 as the best hope.”*

Clearly, you are saying that those who disagree with you, which includes me, have been scrambling around for months trying to find a passage where *epi* means “with” so we could counter your completely adequate arguments. And, after doing that scrambling, *finally* we “settled on Heb. 8:8 as the best hope.” That accuses those who are the target of your statement of being dishonest, of just trying to protect a private theory and not at all interested in the truth. Of course, you had already accused me of that. But, anyone who reads our exchange knows that your accusation is a perversion of the truth. You have told us what is apparent to you so I will now tell you what is apparent to me. It appears to me that you think that anyone who disagrees with you must be either ignorant or dishonest. And, *that* image is no credit to you.

Respond to my last review or not, as you wish. It’s your choice.

Maurice Barnett.