

Shayla: Had the synagogue leader's daughter died or not?

Meforshim:

Your difficulty is with the NET translators, rather than the original manuscripts. The NET rendered the passages in question as follows:

- Matthew 9:18 NET As he was saying these things, a ruler came, bowed low before him, and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live.
- Mark 5:23 NET He asked him urgently, "My little daughter is near death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be healed and live."
- Luke 8:42 NET because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds pressed around him

As you can see, in the Holman the translators rendered "my daughter has it finally", i.e. "my daughter is at the end of life" as "my daughter is near death" in Matthew and "at death's door" in Mark and Luke.

- **Matthew 9:18 HCSB** As He was telling them these things, suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before Him, saying, "My daughter is near death, but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live."
- **Mark 5:23 HCSB** and kept begging Him, "My little daughter is at death's door. Come and lay Your hands on her so she can get well and live."
- **Luke 8:42 HCSB** because he had an only daughter about 12 years old, and she was at death's door. While He was going, the crowds were nearly crushing Him.

The synopsis is admittedly difficult.

Mark uses the phrase "*eskhatos ech'o*" (Strong's #2079 + #2192) which would mean at the extreme edge of death, the very point of death, in the last gasp of life. In Latin, we would render this as *in extremis* which means in extremity; in dire straits. Or we could say *in articulo mortis* (at the point of death).

Luke says she was *apothnesko* (Strong's #599) but it puts it in the imperfect tense. The imperfect tense shows continuous or linear type of action just like the present tense. It always indicates an action continually or repeatedly happening in past time. It portrays the action as going on for some extended time. However, the idea of continual action in the past does not apply when the verb "to be" is in the imperfect tense. There it should be considered a simple action happening in past time, without regard to its ongoing or "repeated happening" in the past. Therefore the best translation of *apothnesko* in Luke 8:42 must be "*she is dying*," or "*she is continually being at death's door*."

In both of these passages, not only does the language indicate proximity to death rather than death itself, but we are provided with the lexical clues of the friends coming shortly and basically saying "don't bother she just died."

On the other hand, Matthew has the leader saying "*arti teleutao*" (Strong's #737 + 5053). *Arti* means "just now, this moment, now at this time, or at this very time. *Teleutao* means to finish, bring to an end, close or come to an end. So, the implication would be "she's ending right now" or "she's dying as we speak." If taken alone, and taking into account that Matthew doesn't include the friends coming and confirming her death, it would be very easy to translate *arti teleutao* as "she just died." However, we DO have the other two Gospels so we have an indication that an alternative and plausible translation is needed.

There are two ways to deal with the issue. First, we could simply say that Matthew focuses on the point in time when the friends arrived, keeping the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and the resurrection of the young girl in two separate, neat passages. Matthew is known for this. He often telescopes or condenses his accounts, deemphasizing

some elements in order to emphasize others. In this particular case he is not wrong; he's just starts the story a little later than the other two. He combines the fact that she was in extremis with the fact that at some point the leader said "Don't bother coming, she died" without going into as much detail as Mark and Luke do.

The second way is to understand that as far as the synagogue leader was concerned, his daughter was so close to death that she might have died as he was coming to get Jesus or that he was saying "she might as well be dead she's so far gone." The passage does say he begged Jesus repeatedly (Mark 5:23). Perhaps he started by saying "she's at death's door" but then as he kept pleading, like any father would in this state of desperation, he said, "My daughter is so sick that she's probably dead by now."

Either way there is no conflict in the original. However, I believe that rendering Matthew 9:18 as the translators of the NET do renders a disservice to the average reader who is not able to study the original for him or herself.