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A STUDY OF ALQN IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1950

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There are chiefly three purposes in this study. The first is to gain a better understanding of the Scriptures. To achieve this purpose an individual word has been selected, since it is the author's opinion that such a study will contribute most to a conviction of the unity of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, and at the same time facilitate efficiency in handling certain basic mechanical tools for further the future studies, such as the concordance, lexicon, and commentaries.

Secondly, a study of the Scripture should offer personal edification. Every word of the Scriptures should bear witness to Jesus Christ. Hence if He can also be discovered in this word through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, faith will be strengthened and confirmed.

Finally, there are a number of exegetes in this day who are attaching considerable significance to this concept of aeons and time designations in general as used in the Scriptures. Related to this is the distinction being made between a philosophy of secular history and the Biblical view of history. Also since the term αἰών has been variously used and translated by the ancient church as well as the church today in the collects, hymns, and other liturgical forms, a special interest is attached to the word.

It might be stated at the outset that a conclusive answer on all the questions which arise associated with this term is not expected, nor is that an essential purpose of this effort.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### A. Classical Usage

##### 1. Used as "life itself", as "strength of life":

Ψυχή, in its classical usage, was used to designate a wide variety of concepts ranging from time to timelessness or eternity. Its earliest known classical use is in ninth-century Homer<sup>1</sup>: "But if I return home to my dear native land, lost is my noble fame; yet for a long time shall my Ψυχή endure, neither shall the end of death light quickly upon me". Here the meaning of Ψυχή is synonymous with βίος, the course of life, with a special emphasis on the strength and energy that supports life. Again Homer uses the term to represent the physical constituency of life<sup>2</sup>: "But whenever soul and Ψυχή should leave him, send Death and sweet Sleep". Here soul and life are internally and externally connected by the paratactics καί and καί, ψυχή being the spiritual and mental aspects of this life and Ψυχή the physical. Both are described as fleeting and perishable. Pindar, about four centuries later, uses the term as the central essence of physical life. He calls the marrow of the bones Ψυχή<sup>3</sup>. According to ancient mythology, the marrow of the bones was thought to contain the essence of life which we consider protoplasm to be today.

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<sup>1</sup>Homer, Iliad 9, 415.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 16, 453.

<sup>3</sup>Pindar, From Heracles and his Club, Fragments, 111, 5.

2. Used as "time" or "length of life", "life of a family" or "generation":

Pindar<sup>4</sup> is also one of the first of the classical authors to use αἰών in a strictly temporal sense. He describes the length of life, the αἰών of man, as a destined period of time. Herodotus (485 - 425 B. C.) the historian makes a slightly more general use of the term when he says that man's αἰών is the period from birth to death<sup>5</sup>. In the same context Herodotus speaks of the average time of life as being seventy years. Thucydides (471? - 400?) uses the term in the same way<sup>6</sup>: "In this way they toil, with hardships and dangers for their οἶκον τοῦ αἰῶνος". The αἰών of each person is the time that he lives. Xenophon (434? - 355?), the Athenian historian and general, describes the αἰών or life time of man as ending at death<sup>7</sup>: "When his αἰών was far advanced, Cyrus, being already very old, went into Persia the seventh time during his reign".

Αἰών is also used to designate the ancient method of reckoning time in history by generations. Aeschylus, (525 - 456 B. C.), the Athenian tragic poet, uses the term to cover the period of three generations, αἰῶνα τριῶνα<sup>8</sup>. This use may be similar to that of Herodotus' computation of the average life as seventy years; though there is no evidence that Aeschylus had any definite number of years in mind.

A still broader use of αἰών is found in the Athenian orator

<sup>4</sup>Pindar, Olympian Odes II, 10.

<sup>5</sup>Herodotus, Book I, 32.

<sup>6</sup>Thucydides, I, 70, 8.

<sup>7</sup>Xenophon, Cyropaedia VIII, 7, 1.

<sup>8</sup>Aeschylus, The Seven Against Thebes, 742, 771.

Demosthenes<sup>9</sup> (384 - 322 B. C.): "Of men mentioned ἐν παντὶ τῷ αἰῶνι, the worst is Philip". Here the whole period of human existence, at least as far previous as known to this golden-age Athenian, is summed up under the term αἰῶν. Of special significance is the fact that Demosthenes uses the singular here. This indicates that this specific use is not the same as above, i.e. generations, or periods of life. From the beginning of human existence until the present is αἰῶν.

### 3. Used as "eternity", "timelessness":

Beginning with Plato (427 - 347 B. C.) αἰῶν takes on the meaning both of time as well as timelessness or eternity<sup>10</sup>. In his account of the origin of the universe Plato says<sup>11</sup>: "But inasmuch as the nature of the Living Creature was αἰώνιος, this quality it was impossible to attach in its entirety to what is generated; wherefore He planned to make a moveable image of αἰώνιος, and, as He set in order the Heaven, of that αἰώνιος which abided in Unity, He made an αἰώνιον image, moving according to number, even that which we have named ὑπόστασις". Plato is describing ὑπόστασις as coming into existence with the Heavens, but αἰώνιος cannot even be described by the copulas "always was" and "is" and "ever shall be". Sasse remarks on this passage<sup>12</sup>:

Während die griechische Sprache sonst zwischen chronos und aion so unterscheidet, dass Chronos die Zeit an sich, Aion die relative Zeit, die einem Wesen zukommt, bezeichnet, unterscheidet

<sup>9</sup>Demosthenes, Letters II, 7.

<sup>10</sup>O. Cullmann, Christus und die Zeit (Zuerich: A. G. Zollikon Verlag, 1946), p. 53.

<sup>11</sup>Plato, Timaeus, 37 D.

<sup>12</sup>H. Sasse, Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), 1, 197.

Platon zwieshen Aion als der zeitlosen, ideellen Ewigkeit, in der es keine Tage, Monate, und Jahre gibt, und Chronos als der Zeit, die mit der Welt geschaffen ist als bewegtes Abbild der Ewigkeit.

#### 4. Definition and etymology:

Aristotle defines the term for us and gives us the immediate etymology<sup>13</sup>:

The total time which circumscribes the length of life of every creature and which cannot in nature be exceeded, they named the αἰών of each. By the same analogy also the sum existence of the whole heaven, the sum which includes all time even to infinity, is αἰών, taking the name from ἀΐ αἰών, for it is immortal and divine.

But there is some dispute as to the etymology. Trench<sup>14</sup> says: "We must reject Aristotle. It is probably connected with αἶ, αἶμα, to breath. Like κόσμος is has a primary and physical sense, and a secondary and ethical sense". Thayer<sup>15</sup> agrees with Trench and adds: "αἰών (αιων) is now generally connected with αιει, αιει, Skr. êvas (aivas), Lat. aevum, Go h. aivs, Germ. Ewig, Eng. aye, ever". Aristotle's definition is correct for his own use and that of his contemporaries. Also his etymology suits only his own particular usage. This can again be verified by his statement<sup>16</sup>: "Accordingly then, the whole world was not generated and cannot be destroyed, as some allege, but is unique and eternal, having not beginning or end τὸν ἄριστον αἰῶνα, containing infinite time and

<sup>13</sup>Aristotle, Concerning Heaven I, 9, p.279a, 23ff.

<sup>14</sup>R. C. Trench, Synonyms in the New Testament (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner, 1915), paragraph 59, p. 205

<sup>15</sup>J. H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the N. T. (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 18

<sup>16</sup>Aristotle, On the Heavenly Bodies II, 1, p. 283b, 26ff.

embracing it in itself". Also Diodorus of Sicily uses the adverb to describe a stone structure which endures αἰώνιον<sup>17</sup>. But at another time he uses it as the period of one human life<sup>18</sup>: "As for clothing, certain of them wear none whatsoever, going naked all their life long".

Philo, in the New Testament period, still follows Plato's eternity concept, contrasting it with chronos. He says<sup>19</sup>:

Again the three days before the sun's creation are equal in number to the three which followed it (Gen. 1, 5ff.), the whole six being divided by equality to express πρὸς αἰῶνα καὶ χρόνον. For God dedicated the three before the sun to αἰώνι, and the three after it to time, which is a copy of αἰῶνος.

Similarly he uses αἰών to express the timelessness of God and χρόνος the human type or means of comprehending eternity<sup>20</sup>: "For God's life is not a time, but αἰών, which is the archetype and pattern of time; and ἐν αἰώνι there is no part nor future, but only present existence". This thought is parallel to Plato's. Epictetus, the late first-century Stoic, also uses the term in the sense of eternal, a quality attributed only to God<sup>21</sup>: "For I am not αἰών, but a man; a part of the whole, as an hour is part of a day". Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, (121 - 80 A.D.), implies that αἰών covers all time, there not being a present but only a past and future<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>17</sup>Diodorus of Sicily, I, 63, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Diodorus of Sicily, III, 8, 5.

<sup>19</sup>Philo, Who is the Heir of Divine Things, 165.

<sup>20</sup>Philo, On the Unchangeableness of God, 32.

<sup>21</sup>Epictetus, Discourses, II, 5, 13.

<sup>22</sup>Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, IV, 45.

This then is briefly the development among the Greek authors. The study is not exhaustive but sufficient to show that αἰών has broadened through the centuries from a short period of time, a human quality, length of one human life, length of time of a family, generation, to the time embracing the history of all mankind, and finally includes the period before the first man, extending from the timeless period before time was created and into the timeless future. Plato contributes the most to the idea of eternity as a timeless condition. Often it seems that αἰών is personified, especially by Plato and Philo.

A study of the classical usage contributes chiefly a negative result; namely, that the biblical writers were not influenced by it. As will be noticed later, the concept of אֵלֶּיךָ in both the Old Testament with its parallels in the New Testament does not develop and change so noticeably, nor does eternity in the biblical usage ever bear the meaning of timelessness, but rather that of a period of limited or unlimited time.

#### B. Old Testament and Rabbinic Usage

There are two words in the Old Testament which are most commonly translated by αιων in the LXX, namely, אֵלֶּיךָ and אֵלֶּיךָ. Of these אֵלֶּיךָ occurs most frequently.

##### 1. Basic meaning of אֵלֶּיךָ in the Old Testament:

Basically אֵלֶּיךָ means no more than a concealed, distant time which begins at the place where man no longer can see<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>23</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 199.

Harkavy<sup>24</sup> says that properly חִסְיוֹן is "something hidden". By origin, then, the meaning is quite indefinite and relative. For instance Amos 9:11 calls the time of David: חִסְיוֹן יָדָיו "days of old", and the LXX translates: ἡμέρας τῶν ἡμερῶν. Similarly in Deut. 32:7 the LXX translates חִסְיוֹן דָּוִד as ἡμέρας ἡμερῶν. Is. 61:4 says בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ, "the ancient ruins" and the LXX uses the adjective ἐρανοῦς ἡμερῶν.

In order to make the designation more definite, the O. T. uses the prefix בְּ or בְּ which corresponds to ἐν, ἐν, or ἐν respectively in the LXX. In Gen. 6:4 in comparing the wicked mixture of the ungodly with the pious people who lived before this time, the O. T. uses בְּיָמֵינוּ and the LXX: ἐν τῶν ἡμερῶν. So also Gen. 3:22 and 6:3 the בְּ in the Hebrew text is translated by ἐν in the LXX.

## 2. Plurals, formulation, doubling:

The plural use of יָמֵינוּ is no doubt carried over from the Hebrew. Solomon's dedication prayer states, 2 Chron. 6:2 "A place for Thy dwelling forever, בְּיָמֵינוּ, עַד תָּמִיד יָמֵינוּ". In Psalm 60 (61):5 David uses the same plural term, בְּיָמֵינוּ, translated in the LXX with ἐν τῶν ἡμερῶν, again in his prayer for God's continual dwelling within his heart. So we see that the plural formula does not increase the period of time which is to be understood. Other examples of the same use are Ps. 76:8; Sir. 45:24; Tob. 3:11; 8:5.15; 11:14; 13:1.

The other Hebrew word translated by יָמֵינוּ is יָמֵינוּ. Sasse again points out that the idea of a period of time was always in יָמֵינוּ, which

<sup>24</sup>A. Harkavy, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1938), pp. 508 - 509.

belongs to poetical speech and means unlimited future. There is one exception to this use, namely, Job 20:4 where the writer says that the duration of the ungodly has always, (לְנֶגְדֵךְ אֲנִי וְלֹא־יָדָעְתִּי) been short.

Harkavy<sup>25</sup> gives these meanings for לְנֶגְדֵךְ: duration, everlastingness, eternity. In Hab. 3:6 לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ are translated in the LXX by ἀειδίαι ἀειδίαι. For the preposition prefix, בְּ or בַּ, the LXX translates uses ἐν, ἐν, or ἐν. In Prov. 12:19 the formula לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ is not translated at all in the LXX; but this is a textual problem.

The most interesting and important developments of this formula are found in the doubling and compounding of both לְנֶגְדֵךְ and לְנֶגְדֵךְ. This frequent usage gives us the best explanation for the N. T. formula: ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ αἰῶνος as it often occurs. Ps. 44 (45):7 describes the throne of God as abiding לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ; the LXX renders: ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ αἰῶνος. This same passage is quoted in Hebrews 1:8.

The formula may also contain the prepositions, as in Exodus 15:18: The Lord reigns לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ; in the LXX: ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι. In Ps. 9:5 it is said that the name of the ungodly shall disappear לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ, ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ αἰῶνος (LXX). The same form, without the preposition ἐν, is found in Ps 10:16 and is translated again by ἐν in the LXX. Ps. 21:5 has לְנֶגְדֵךְ and the LXX ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι αἰῶνος. Ps. 45:18 (17) contrasts this formula with generations: לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ, ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι, and לְנֶגְדֵךְ לְנֶגְדֵךְ for ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ αἰῶνος. For similar usages compare also Ps. 48:15 (14); 52:10(8);

<sup>25</sup>Harkavy, op. cit., p. 503.



Eth. En. 25:3.5.7; the eternal King, Slav. En. 64:3AB; βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων, Eth. En. 9:4; 12:3; Tob. 13:6.10; I Cl. 61:2; κυριεύων τῶν αἰώνων, Eth. En. 22:14; ἐπιτεταμένος αἰώνων, Jos. Ant. 1:272. Sasse<sup>28</sup> says that eventually all sorts of meanings were read into βασιλεύς τῶν αἰώνων as: "Koenig der Aeonen, als der, welcher ueber die αἰώνων gebietet, wobei die αἰώνων bald als Zeitraeume, bald als Weltraeume, vielleicht sogar als persoenliche wesen verstanden worden sind". This is shown by such expressions as πατήρ τῶν αἰώνων, Just. Ap. 41:2; I Cl. 35:3. We find a very similar expression in Is. 9:5: ἡν-ἰ-ἰ-ἰ, and the LXX inconsistently translates: πατήρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰώνος.

#### 4. Used as a long time, eternity:

So far then, we have seen אביו and אנ to be the most frequent Hebrew terms for αἰώνων. When associated with humans they usually mean just a long time, sometimes definite, sometimes indefinite, sometimes referring to the past, sometimes to the future, or to both. When these terms are associated with God, they refer to eternity, to Him who was before the creation: Ps. 101 (102):26: "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth"; who will remain after the heavens and earth are destroyed, v.27: "They shall perish but thou shalt endure". And since human thought cannot comprehend eternity as such, or the eternal God, language must confine itself to relative events or times. So the eternal being of God is seen only in pictures of preexistence or postexistence. Sasse<sup>29</sup> refers to the fallacy of Plato's Timaeus, 37, e, who says:

<sup>28</sup> Sasse, op. cit., p. 201

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

"For days and nights and months and years were not before the heaven was made", and to Philo<sup>30</sup> who is supposed to have attempted to change the Jewish concept of time: "For time, (χρόνος), was not before the world, (κόσμος)".

We must conclude then that only from the context can we determine whether αἰών actually means eternity or whether it refers to some period of the history of the universe, or whether it refers to the entire age of the world. It usually has a temporal connotation, but sometimes also a spatial one. Taylor Lewis<sup>31</sup>, commenting on Eccl. 3:11 says that this passage: "καί τις τῶν τῶν αἰώνων ἔδωκεν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν the Preacher has in mind a spatial "world". Lewis continues that אֵלֶּיךָ and אֵלֶּיךָ in certain instances mean "world", in others "world-time". By the time of 4 Esr. 3:19 and 8:41 the spatial and temporal ideas are together<sup>32</sup>. This is also verified by Heb. 1:2: "ὅτι οὐ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας"<sup>33</sup>

#### 5. Recurrence of αἰῶνες:

Another aspect of the O. T. and Rabbinic literature is the recurrence of the αἰῶνες. This idea is deduced from the plural usages of אֵלֶּיךָ and אֵלֶּיךָ especially in their eschatological use. Once the use is: συντέλεσεν τὸν αἰῶνα, Sir. 43:78<sup>34</sup>, and then again in the plural: συντέλεσεν τῶν αἰώνων Test. L. 10 as also in I Cor. 10:11. Also in 4 Esr. 11:44 the thought is that the time of the world is a row of smaller αἰῶνες. Then the αἰῶνες are not thought of as something static

<sup>30</sup> Philo, Op. Mund., 26.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor Lewis, Lange-Schaff Commentary on Ecclesiastes (New York: Scribners, 1870), pp. 44-51.

<sup>33</sup> For parallels in oriental religions compare H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also Matt. 13:39.40.49; 24:3; 28:20.

or single; rather, the whole series of ἄνωγες is constantly recurring. Then creation and the end cannot be viewed as absolute points, but just as a change from one ἄνωγ to another<sup>35</sup>. Sasse<sup>36</sup>, in commenting on the phrase of Eccl. 3:1, יָדָא יָדָא, says that this passage contains some oriental thought of a determination of history. Also Eccl. 1:9: "There is nothing new under the sun" seems to indicate that what was new already existed in the aeons of the world. To see in this concept of periods of recurring time, as Sasse does, the influence of a pantheistic, astrologic Babylonian idea which is not in keeping with the time/eternity teaching of the Bible, is to press the expression unduly. This will be shown later.

#### 6. The two ἄνωγες:

Another expression which is supposed to be a combination of the multiple aeon idea and of the time/eternity idea is that of the two aeons: שָׁמַיְתָא וְתַבְלִיטָא and אֲרַמְלֵת וְתַבְלִיטָא. In the first place we must note that these terms are not used by the Old Testament writers except in Is. 9:5 where the LXX translates יְהוָה יִצְחָק with Πατὴρ τοῦ μελλόντος ἄνωγος. However, while a reference to the exact terms is lacking in the O. T., the idea is, nevertheless, present. In prophecy of the N. T. church, the Lord promises to create a new heaven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem which is glad, in which the sinner will be cut off and the believer remain forever, Is. 65: 17ff. The missionary expansion of this new heaven and new earth is spoken of in Is. 66:22f. The idea might also be present in the many instances in the O. T. where the godly are separated from the wicked, e. g. Ps. 1. Also the many prophecies of the Messianic age include this idea, e. g. in Zachariah.

<sup>35</sup>This is expressed in: Pseudo-Aristat. Schrift, Mund. 5, p. 397, 9ff.

<sup>36</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 204.

Sasse<sup>37</sup> points out that this two-aeon idea is found almost entirely in apocalyptic literature, most of which originates in the first century B. C. In Eth. En. 48:7: "this world of unrighteousness" is spoken of, and in 71:15 we find: "in the name of the coming world". Slav. En. speaks of: "this aeon of pain", 66:6; the "coming aeon", 43:3; the "one aeon", 65:8; the "great aeon", 61:2; the "endless aeon", 50:2 and 66:6. And Sasse continues:

Vollendet ist die Lehre von den beiden Aionen in sy. Baruch und vor allem 4 Esr (Ende des 1 Jhdts n. Christus). In 4 Esr stehen die Aionen sich gegeneinander als hoc saeculum (zB 4,2), hoc tempus (7,113), hic mundus (9,19). . . . Der Wechsel zwischen saeculum, mundus, tempus entspricht genau dem Wechsel von aioun, kosmos, kairos im N. T. Auch hier gehen zeitliche und räumliche Vorstellungen durcheinander, wenn auch in 4 Esr. die zeitliche Vorstellung von den beiden Aionen, die durch ein sieben-tägiges Schweigen der Welt (7,30f) und durch den darauf folgenden Tag der Auferstehung und des Gerichts (7,32f. 113) geschieden sind, vorherrscht. Syr. Bar. stimmt mit dieser Anschauung von den aiounes überein, nur tritt der räumliche Dualismus dadurch stärker hervor, dass der Himmel (nicht die Erde wie in 4 Esr) der Schauplatz des Lebens im kommenden aioun ist (sy. Bar. 51, 8ff).

The use of אֵיִן אֵיִן and קֵיִן אֵיִן in Rabbinic literature before the time of the N. T. is very scarce. Sasse<sup>38</sup> quotes several allusions to this concept by Talmudic authors and says:

Dass die Rabbinen die beiden Aionen im zeitlichen Sinne verstanden haben, zeigen die mannigfachen Versuche, den älteren Begriff der Endzeit, 'die Tage des Messias' in das Schema der Zwei-Aionen-Lehre einzuordnen. Dem Bedeutungswandel des aram אֵיִן entsprechend, tritt aber die räumliche Auffassung mehr und mehr hervor, und der Dualismus von Gegenwart und Zukunft geht in den der sichtbaren und der unsichtbaren Welt, der Diesseits und des Jenseits, über, ein Vorgang, der in der Geschichte der christlichen Eschatologie seine Parallele hat.

<sup>37</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 206.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

In conclusion, the O. T. belief in eternity is a simple one. The term אין usually has a temporal connotation, though in a few instances it refers to the spatial world, kosmos<sup>39</sup>. Also the word זמן always refers to time, short or long, when used as a noun. In comparing O. T. usage with classical usage, we must agree with Cullmann that the classical concept of eternity, especially to that of Plato, is foreign to that of the O. T. To Plato eternity was timelessness, but to the O. T. writers it was just unlimited time. The difference would be like the customary distinction between αι and και, or αἰωνος and αιωνος. Apparently the concept of timelessness is too abstract and speculative, and for that reason God had adjusted his language, in this case also, to the concrete anthropomorphic comprehension of man.

As already noted, the progression or widening of the period of time designated with אין in the classical authors through the centuries is lacking in the O. T. records. Sasse<sup>40</sup> ascribes to אין the meaning of unlimited time for the first time in Deutero-Isaiah; the present author cannot agree with Sasse on this view.

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<sup>39</sup>Cf. O. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>40</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 206.

## CHAPTER III

### GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

#### A. Formulation

##### 1. The various formulas with preposition:

It has been pointed out that the New Testament use comes primarily from the LXX. As the formulas occur in the LXX, so we find them throughout in the New Testament, even in a more advanced form. The prepositions ἀπὸ, πρὸ, ἐκ correspond to the Hebrew prefix בְּ, and the preposition ἐν corresponds to the Hebrew בְּ.

The prepositional formulas of the New Testament all refer to time before a certain point or to future time. Whether this time is eternity or just a long or distant or unbroken time can be determined only by context. In Luke 1:70 Zacharias prophesies: "Even as he had foretold through the mouth of his holy prophets ἀπὸ ἀνωθεν". This is a specific time which we hold to be from 1500 B. C. to approximately 400 B. C. Acts 3:21 uses the same formula in a similar context. But in Acts 15:18 mission work to the gentiles was made known by the Lord ἀπὸ ἀνωθεν". This is a quotation from Is. 45:21 and means "from the creation". The LXX indicates this by using ἀπὸ κτίσεως instead of ἀνωθεν. This verse in Acts contains a textual variation which would change the meaning entirely. But this is a problem beyond the author's purpose. The same meaning is found in Jn. 9:32: "ἐν τῷ ἀνωθεν it has not been heard of that a person opened the eyes of a man who had been born blind," i. e. during the time that man has existed. Also in Jd. 25 πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων refers to the glory of Christ before creation.

By far the majority of formulas refer to the future, all with the preposition εἰς. This exact phrase, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα occurs twenty-seven times in the N. T. It usually means forever after, i. e. the beginning is limited, but the future is unlimited. For instance, Jesus offers to the woman of Sychar living water, which, if she drank, she would not thirst εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, Jn. 4:14. Other examples which clearly imply an unlimited future are: Jn. 6:51 of eating bread and living forever; 2 Cor. 9:9 where Christ's righteousness remains forever; Hebrews 5:6 and 7:17. 21 where Christ is the High Priest forever; I Pet. 1:25 the word of the Lord remains forever; I Jn. 1:17 the will of God remains forever; and Jn. 12:34 says that the prophets foretold Christ would remain forever. This same formula means only a limited future in the following passages: Jn. 13:8 Peter exclaims that Jesus shall not wash his feet εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; Jn. 14:16 the Father will send another Paraclete that He may be with them εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; Lk. 1:55 God had spoken to Abraham and to his seed εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; I Cor. 8:13 Paul will not eat meat εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα if it should offend his brother. In Jd. 13 the formula omits the article: "to whom has been reserved the black of darkness εἰς αἰῶνα", referring to the judgment day.

## 2. Plural Formulas:

The plural use of the formulas, while still following the LXX form, illustrates a more genuine conception of unlimited future. The doxology ending the Lord's Prayer in Matt. 6:13, according to certain mss., concludes with: εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. In the Annunciation to Mary, the angel said: "And He will reign in the house of Jacob εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας"; Luke 1:33. This passage is best interpreted by comparing the prophecy of Micah 4:7 to which this is an allusion: "And the Lord shall reign over

them in Mount Zion עַל הַר צִיּוֹן וְעַל הַר צִיּוֹן וְעַל הַר צִיּוֹן. The singular for the plural does not change the idea of unlimited future. In Rom. 1:25 Paul describes the ungodly who change the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס אֲמִיךָ. In this passage the eternity of the Creator is placed in contrast to mortal man. Again in Rom. 9:5 Paul concludes with the same doxological exclamation. In Rom. 11:36 he concludes: "to God be glory forever. Amen". God and the Father of our Lord Jesus are blessed עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס in II Cor. 11:31. The idea of an unlimited future is unmistakably shown in Heb. 13:8: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס".

However, to assume that the plural is essential to the meaning of eternity, unlimited future, is a mistake. Sasse<sup>1</sup> points out that Heb. 5:6 and 7:24, describing Christ as the High Priest עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס, would have interchangeable meanings with Heb. 13:8, where the plural is used. It is evident that the former is a quotation from the LXX, Ps. 110:4, while the latter is perhaps influenced by apocalyptic literature.

Also the plural phrases indicating an unlimited beginning are noted, as I cor. 2:7: "which God has foreordained עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס". Col. 1:26 also says: "the mystery which has been revealed עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס", and then continues עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס, clearly showing the eternity of the former. Eph. 3:9 again speaks of the mystery hidden עַל תָּיִם אֲדִמְרָס. Here also Sasse<sup>2</sup> rightly remarks that the singular could have been used just as well.

<sup>1</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

In the expression Χρόνῳ αἰώνιῳ there is an inner contradiction, a contradictio in adiecto. Rom. 16:25 reads: "according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept silent Χρόνῳ αἰώνιῳ"; Titus 1:2: "the truth which God promised ἡμῖν Χρόνῳ αἰώνιῳ"; and in 2 Tim. 1:9: "the grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus ἡμῖν Χρόνῳ αἰώνιῳ". While Χρόνος is usually a definite period of time<sup>3</sup>, eternal time might still be explained by the adjective form. Gullmann<sup>4</sup> points out that when αἰώνιος is used as an attribute of God, it loses its temporal sense and becomes more qualitative. Could it not also here? Nygren<sup>5</sup> translates this term "for long ages".

### 3. Doubling, and doxological use:

It will be noticed that many of these formulas, especially in the plural, are similar to one another. The supposition is that they are well-known formulas in the doxologies or hymns of the early church. This is especially plain in such passages as the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer according to some manuscripts of Matt. 6:13, and such phrases as: God who is blessed εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; and 2 Cor. 11:31. This doxological strain will also be evident in the doubling of the formulas to follow.

The doubled formulas seem to follow the pattern of the LXX. In Heb. 1:8 the writer quotes Ps. 44:7: "Your throne, O God, (remains) εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸν αἰῶνος". This doubled formula occurs twenty-one times

<sup>3</sup> O. Gullmann, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> A. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, Carl Rasmussen, translator, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), p. 457.

in the N. T. and all but Heb. 13:21 and I Pet. 4:11 and 5:11 are in Paul and Revelation. A typical example is Rom. 16:27: "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων". Another from Revelations: (11:15) "of our Lord and of our Christ, and He shall reign εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων", which quotes the LXX. A close similarity is noticed in all these plural doubled formulas.

Several double formulas seem to be blended together from single ones. These give us an insight into their meaning. Eph. 3:21 says: "to Him be glory . . . in Christ Jesus εἰς πάντα τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνα τῶν αἰώνων αἰῶν". Sasse<sup>6</sup> divides this into εἰς πάντα τὰς γενεὰς and εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τῶν αἰώνων. This is an evidence of the interchange of time and eternity. Likewise in II Peter 18 the formula: "to whom be glory καὶ τῶν καὶ εἰς ἄμεινον αἰῶνας" can be divided, as Sasse again says, into: εἰς ἄμεινον and εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

To further illustrate the doxological trend, the adjective form αἰώνιος gives us numerous examples. Rom. 16:26: ὁ αἰώνιος Θεός is the same as found in Gen. 21:33 in the LXX. Matt. 18:8 speaks of: τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον; 2 Thes. 2:16 of the "eternal comfort"; 2 Tim. 2:10 of "eternal glory"; Heb. 5:2 of "eternal judgment"; 9:14 of the "eternal Spirit"; 11:3:20 of the "eternal covenant"; 2 Pet. 1:11 of the "eternal kingdom"; and Rev. 14:6 of the "eternal Gospel". All of these can be found in similar expressions in the LXX. As attributes they might stress the quality more than the period of time<sup>7</sup>.

The meaning of αἰών is still not always clear and certain. Many formulas seem to be derived from the LXX. We dare not assume that these

<sup>6</sup>Sasse, op. cit., p.199

<sup>7</sup>Supra. p.10.

are just trite sayings which were not intended to convey any specific meaning. For the Scriptures were given that men might have ὡς ἡ ἀνωγειαν. So that it might ultimately be possible to discern this purpose of Scripture in the various uses of αἰών, we must examine the meaning first in those passages which are more clearly defined by the context, and then proceed to those which are more obscure.

4. References to time from creation to judgment day; eschatological usage:

In certain passages αἰών clearly designates the world from creation to the parousia either in its temporal or spatial aspects. These passages are chiefly eschatological. In them αἰών is found both in the singular and plural with a similar meaning. In Matt. 13:39 it is: the close of the aeon, ἐν τῇ συντέλει τοῦ αἰῶνος, and in vv. 40 and 49: ἐν τῇ συντέλει τοῦ αἰῶνος. In Matt. 24:3 Jesus' disciples ask: "and what is the sign of τῆς συντέλειας τοῦ αἰῶνος?" and in v. 6 Jesus answers: "all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet, τῆς συντέλειας". And in Matt. 28:20 Jesus promises: "I am with you ἕως τῆς συντέλειας τοῦ αἰῶνος". In all these references the meaning seems to be temporal, the time of the world from beginning to end being understood as a single aeon. The plural of this formula is also found in I Cor. 10:11 where Paul relates that the punishments of the O. T. Jews are types for us and their record is to admonish us: "unto whom τῶν αἰῶνων κατήντηται". And in Hebrews 9:26: For then he must often suffer ὅτι κατεβόησεν ἡσθαι. ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν once ἐπὶ συντέλειᾳ τῶν αἰῶνων hath He appeared to put away sin through His sacrifice.

Lange-Schaff<sup>8</sup> remarks

<sup>8</sup>Lange-Schaff, Commentary on I Corinthians (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1870), p. 200.

that the two uses are the same, as also the phrases in Matt. 13:24 and 28.

The τέλος in I Cor. 10:11 denotes time as is evident in I Pet. 4:7: τὸ

τέλος of all things is near. Then Lange-Schaff continues:

The ages are the great world periods preceding the manifestation of Christ and out-goings of which mark the incoming manifestation. The αἰών αἰώνων is contemplated in its progressive unfolding through manifold periods, whose exit finally leads to the last decisive crisis which passes over to the αἰών αἰώνων. Now the Apostle regards his time as the time of this grand crisis—as time of severe trials for the faithful, in which it becomes them to be on their guard and for which it was important for them to prepare.

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Bachmann<sup>9</sup> says:

αἰώνων ist hier durch den Zusammenhang als die Menge der vormessianischen Zeitperioden bestimmt, denen, weil sie eine vielgliedrige Reihe bilden, auch mehr als ein End- und Zielpunkt (τέλος) zugeschrieben wird. Das Eigentümliche des Ausdrucks liegt aber darin, dass diese End- und Zielpunkte selber in zielstrebigere Bewegung dargestellt sind. Es wird also dadurch der Gedanke, dass die Christusgemeinde das Ziel aller Geschichte bildet, doppelt unterstrichen.

While this passage is difficult, we can understand its meaning to be temporal, beginning with creation and ending with judgment, after which no more precept and admonition will be needed to avert the faithful from wickedness. The perfect tense of κατατάξω is used, meaning, the ends of the ages have been arriving in the past and the effect of that arrival is still in force.

For an interpretation of Heb. 9:26 Lange-Schaff<sup>10</sup> says that the παρατίθηται is the same as παρατίθω ἐν τῷ of I Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:20; I Jn. 2:28; 3:5.8. The expression ἐπὶ τὸν καταλήξει τὸν αἰῶνα is in a sense ἐπὶ ἐκ τῶν τῶν ἀνέλας τῶν of chapter 1:1.

<sup>9</sup> Ph. Bachmann in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Th. Zahn, ed. (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1905), p. 333.

<sup>10</sup> Lange-Schaff, Commentary on Hebrews (New York: Scribners, 1870), p.165.

Riggenbach<sup>11</sup> tells us:

Die Selbstdargabe Christi faellt mit seinem Todesleiden (2:9; 13:12) wesentlich zusammen. Bei der Aussage v. 26a setzt der Vf unzweifelhaft voraus, dass durch Christi Tod auch die Suenden der fruheren Generationen gesuehnt sind, und da er im Unterschied von 9,15 hier nicht bloss die Zeit des AB, sondern den ganzen Verlauf der Menschheitsgeschichte von Anfang an ins Auge fasst, tritt deutlich zutage Christus ist am Ende des Weltlaufs (cf. I Kn. 10,11), also in einem Zeitpunkt, der den Gedanken an eine Beabsichtigte Wiederholung seines Opfers ausschliesst, in die geschichtliche Existenz und damit in die Sichtbarkeit getreten (I Pt. 1,20; I Jn. 1,2; 3,5); und in unterschied von 1,2; 11,3 bewahrt ἡμεῖς hier seine temporale Bedeutung, wenngleich mit Einschraenkung auf den Verlauf der gegenwaertigen Welt. (Cf. ἐπιτέλει τὸν κόσμον LXX Dan. 9, 27; ἐπιτελεῖται Dan. 12,13; ἡμεῖς ἐπιτελεῖται Dan. 12,4.

The usage here is undoubtedly temporal. And it seems that the phrase, "in the end of the aeons", refers to the whole period of time during which Christ makes His appearance to men through men's conversion. This period will end at Christ's second appearance.

All the previous eschatological references then have been temporal, limited to the time of the world from creation to the second coming. Whether the designation is singular or plural, the meaning is the same. Whether the writers of Hebrews 9:26 and especially I Cor. 10:11 were thinking of any series of times is difficult to decide. From the precontext of I Cor. 10:11 it appears that the writer was referring specifically to certain events during the wilderness journey, but the plural may also include all other similar events which happened in the history of mankind.

5. As a spatial world:

As in the O. T. אֶרֶץ, the N. T. also uses ἡμεῖς to designate the

<sup>11</sup>E. Riggenbach, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Th. Zahn, ed. (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1905), p. 286.

world as a spatial realm, synonymously with κόσμος. In Jesus' parable of the Sower He relates that one kind of seed is like the word which falls on certain ears and the ἄσπερα τῶν σιτῶν enter in and choke the word, Mark 4:19 par. In itself this could refer to both the temporal or spatial aspect of this world. But when compared with I Cor. 7:33 where Paul mentions that the married persons cannot serve their Lord like the unmarried because the married: ὁ κημένος ἀσπυρῆ τῶν κόσμου, we must conclude that also the Gospel usages refer primarily to the world as a spatial sphere, just as the κόσμος does. The evidence for accepting the σῶν as a spatial concept is further illustrated by Paul's interchange of the terms σῶν and κόσμος. In I Cor. 1:20 he says that God makes foolish the σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου and in I Cor. 2:6 he speaks of σοφίαν τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου and in chapter 9:19 he refers to ἡ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

Also the plural use may have a spatial meaning. In Heb. 1:2: ὅτι οὐ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας, it is quite clear that this refers to the physical universe. Time could of course be meant, but we shall see that time, designated by αἰῶνας, already existed before creation. Also in Heb. 11:3: καταβροῦθαί τοὺς αἰῶνας by the word of God.

This spatial aspect of σῶν would fall into the secondary meaning of the word according to Trench<sup>12</sup>. According to this source, the primary meaning is: time, short or long, in its unbroken duration. And the secondary meaning which naturally follows is: all that exists in the world under the conditions of time.

<sup>12</sup>R. O. Trench, op. cit., p. 205.

## 6. As eternity:

If, as shown above, αἰών means the time of the world from creation to the parousia, and if it also refers to eternity, i. e. unlimited in beginning and without a terminus, then there must also be references to the unlimited time before the world as well as to an unlimited future.

Heb. 13:8 speaks of Christ "the same yesterday, today and εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας", into the unlimited future. In I Cor. 2:7: "the mystery of God has been revealed which was foreordained by God πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων". Eph. 3:9 refers to all time before the creation as well as part of the world-time, i. e. until the mystery was revealed through Christ: ἐκ τῶν αἰώνων.

Unlimited time must of course always be associated with God. This same eternity is also given to Christ. Heb. 13:8 attributes to Christ eternal postexistence. Unlimited preexistence is also attributed to the Son in Heb. 1:10ff. which quotes the prophecy of Ps. 102:26-28: "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. These will be destroyed, but Thou wilt remain; and they all will become old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same and Thy years shall not run out". Also the Father loved the Son: πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, Jn. 17:24. God elected His saints in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:4. Christ was foreordained as the sacrificial Lamb before the foundation of the world, I Pet. 1:20.

The difficulty of the eternity concept as unlimited time is seen in Revelation. The Redeemer is spoken of and calls Himself from prophecy: ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, Rev. 1:17; 2:8; and 22:13. Christ is before and after all things. He is the eternal God. When men see Him, they see

eternity also insofar as the human mind can grasp such a thought. Cullmann<sup>13</sup> explains this concept thus:

Vollends aber ist Christus, der das goettliche Offenbarungswort selber, der Mittler allen goettlichen Handelns ist, so eng mit der unendlichen, goettlichen Zeit verbunden, dass der Verfasser des Hebraeerbriefs sein Wesen geradezu in zeitlichen Terminis ausdrueken kann: Jesus Christus, gestern and heute der gleiche und in die Aionen, Heb. 13, 8.

Ebenso laesst die Johannesapokalypse ihn teilhaben an Gottes Ewigkeit, indem sie ihn als den bezeichnet, der "der erste und der letzte, der Anfang und das Ende ist".

Thayer<sup>14</sup> gives the meaning of this phrase as "the eternal One".

#### 7. The two aeons:

Finally and foremost in keeping with the purpose of this study the usage of the expression ὁ αἰὼν αὐτός and ὁ αἰὼν ἡρῶν with its parallels, must be thoroughly examined.

The origin of these formulas is not from the O. T. or LXX, but the expressions אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ and אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ are first found in the Rabbinic literature of the first century B. C. and especially the first century A. D. Undoubtedly these extra-biblical usages also affected the thinking and terminology of Bible times and writers, especially in the framework of the eschatological passages.

In Mark 10:30 par. the aeon to come is eternal life: "ἐν τῷ αἰὼνίῳ  
 . . . ἐν τῷ αἰὼνίῳ ἐν τῷ αἰὼνίῳ ἐν τῷ αἰὼνίῳ . . . καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰὼνίῳ ἐν τῷ  
αἰὼνίῳ ἐν τῷ αἰὼνίῳ". In Mk. 16:8 Jesus commends the unjust steward  
 for doing wisely, and then says: "οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰὼνὸς τούτου  
 are more wise than the sons of light in their own generation". The meaning

<sup>13</sup> O. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> J. H. Thayer, op. cit., p. 554.

of this passage is clear. The sons of this aeon are αἱ οὐνοὶ like this steward. And whether the aeon is temporal or spatial, it is still implied that it is evil, therefore beginning with the Evil, the Fall, and ending when unjust men no longer exist. In Lk. 20:34.35 Jesus teaches: "The sons τῶν οὐρανῶν τούτων marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐκείνων τούτων and of the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they can no longer die. . ." The evil connotation ascribed to the present aeon in Lk. 16:8 is lacking here. Rather the present aeon can be inferred to begin with the first marriage, i. e. Adam's, if considered to be temporal. If spatial, it would refer to the created κόσμος. The trial period for admittance to the coming aeon is now, κατὰ τὴν ἄρτιον, aorist tense. But αἰὼν ἐκείνος apparently is not limited with the same boundaries as the present aeon. For it exists beyond the resurrection. This passage does not tell us when the αἰὼν ἐκείνος begins. In Matt. 12:32 the Evangelist reports: "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever says a word against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him οὐτὴ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐτὴ ἐκ τῆς ἕκθετης". St. Mark uses the same construction for reporting this saying of Jesus, but instead of the two aeons, he simply states: οὐτὴ τὸν αἰῶνα. The meaning is then that the αἰὼν is used both of this limited world-time and also of the unlimited future, i. e. eternity.

While John never speaks of the two aeons specifically, he frequently refers to ὁ κόσμος οὗτος <sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Infra.

The writer to the Hebrews further interprets Jesus' works concerning the unforgiveable sin. He says in 6:5 that it is impossible to renew to repentance those who "have tasted the good word of God and δυναμεις τῆς μελλουσης αἰωνου". This is best translated as the "spiritual powers of the coming aeon". The inference can be simply and correctly drawn, both from the context and the particle τι, that those who receive and believe the word of God during the present aeon, already taste of the coming aeon. Strathmann<sup>16</sup> comments on this passage:

Ihr gehoeren auch die in der Gemeinde wirksamen Wunderkraefte an (vgl 2,4), Vorboten gleichsam der zukuenftigen Welt in der gegenwaertigen, Das 'gute Wort Gottes' meint die evangelische Heilsbotschaft, die sie samt den die Verkuendigung begleitenden 'Kraefte' kosten wie eine wohlschmeckende und nahrhafte Speise.

Paul's epistles contain the fullest development of the two-aeon idea. In these this paper is particularly interested. As noted above, Paul uses the term αιων in various other formulas, with preposition and without, in the singular and the plural, frequently in doxological phrases, in eschatological contexts, etc., even as in general in the N. T. In eight instances Paul uses the expression: ο αιων ο αιωνων, once with ερωτων. On three occasions he uses: ο αιων αιωνων. Twice he refers to the coming aeon: ο αιων μελλων or επιερκαινος. These will be considered in the following chapters.

<sup>16</sup>H. Strathmann, Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Der Brief an die Hebraer (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1947), p. 99

## CHAPTER IV.

### PAUL'S USE OF THE TWO AEONS

#### A. The Present Aeon

The αἰὼν οὗτος is always described by Paul as an evil period, or as a realm in which sin and death reign<sup>1</sup>. In the beginning of Paul's "practical" section to the Romans, also often called the ethical chapters, Paul tells the readers, Rom. 12:2: "and be not conformed τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφουθήτε τῷ ἀνακαίνωσει τοῦ νοῦς, so that you might prove what is the will of God, the good and the virtuous and perfect". The most acceptable and comprehensive interpretation of this passage which clearly contrasts life in the present aeon with that of the new aeon is that of Paul Althaus<sup>2</sup>:

In ganz bestimmter 'leibhafter' Einzeltat allein ist das Opfer wirklich und bedeutet doch jedesmal wieder die eine grosse Entscheidung zwischen den beiden Weltzeiten, diesem und dem kommenden Aeon, den Uebergang aus dem einen in den anderen. . . . in Jesus Christus ist der neue Aeon schon da, wunderbar in den jetzigen hereingebrochen. Die Christen leben grundsatzlich, weil sie mit Christus diesem Aeon gestorben sind (Gal. 1,4;6,14), schon in dem neuen Aeon. Dazu gilt es nun sich im Leben jederzeit zu bekennen. Das bedeutet: sich nicht bilden lassen nach dem Stile der alten Welt, die dahingeht, sondern nach dem Stile der neuen zukuenftigen Welt. Es geht dabei nicht um etwas Aeusseres, sondern um die Erneuerung des ganzen Personlebens dadurch, dass man die Vernunft (7,23 u.25) von dem in der Taufe geschenkten Heiligen Geiste bestimmen laesst. Von diesem Geiste—Paulus nennt ihn hier nicht ausdruecklich —erneuert, weiss man dann, ohne Gesetz, was jeweils Gottes Wille ist. . . ."

To this view Stoeckhardt<sup>3</sup> agrees in that this present aeon is evil, having

<sup>1</sup>Except perhaps in Eph. 1:21.

<sup>2</sup>P. Althaus, Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Roemerbrief (Goettingen: Bardenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1949), p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, Roemerbrief (St. Louis: C. P. H., 1907), p. 558.

an immoral character, and ruled by the devil according to Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 4:4. He calls this aeon the present "Zeitlauf oder Weltlauf", whose duration is synonymous with the reign of sin. Anders Nygren<sup>4</sup> also says that in the present aeon Wrath, Sin, Law, and Death carry on their harsh rule. He continues that a genuine metamorphosis of mind and conduct must take place if man is to be delivered from the old aeon. Finally He adds, "The old aeon, ὁ αἰῶν οὗτος, Paul here calls by name, but not the new, ὁ καινὸς αἰῶν. But the latter is glimpsed in the expression ἡ ἀνακαινώσις τοῦ νοῦς, the renewal of your mind; for the new man with the new mind, the mind of Christ, corresponds to the new aeon."

I Cor. 1:20 asks: "τοῦ σοφῆς; τοῦ ῥηματούχου; τοῦ σοφιστοῦ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου; does not God make empty τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου;"

The wise, the learned in Scripture, and the disputer refer not only to the Greek philosophers but also to the Jewish leaders. Heinz-Dietrich Wendland<sup>5</sup> comments that the very essence of this wisdom belongs to the old "Weltzeit" which stands in direct opposition to the cross which ushers in the way of the new and coming "Gotteswelt". In this passage of Paul the wisdom of the present aeon is synonymous with the wisdom of the κόσμος. The condemnation which Paul pronounces upon the wisdom of the present aeon is from Is. 29:14 and Ps. 33:10: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to naught the understanding of the prudent". Here again, then, the time of the present aeon is synonymous with the κόσμος which will be destroyed at the End; it is under the wrath of God which is provoked as long as sin reigns.

<sup>4</sup>A. Nygren, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

<sup>5</sup>H. Wendland, Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Korinther (Göttingen: Bardenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1948), p. 14.

In I Cor. 2:6 Paul twice refers to the present aeon and once in v. 8. Paul affirms that his preaching, referring to content, is entirely different from that of the present aeon. He says: "σοφία δὲ λαβοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τέλεισι, σοφία δὲ οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τῶν καταβυσσῶν". Wendland<sup>6</sup> says that Paul is referring to the mystery religions as belonging to the old aeon:

Er kennt zwei Stufen des Glaubens: den noch unmuendigen, unreifen, und den vollkommenen. Aber er sagt damit nicht, dass es zwei Klassen von Glaebigen gaebe, deren eine ein geringeres Heil empfinde als die andere. Paulus nimmt hier eine Vorstellung aus dem Umkreise der hellinistischen Mysterienreligionen auf, in denen der Myste "vollkommen" (teleios) genannt wird, der durch die Weihen zur vollkommenen Erkenntnis der Goettlichen gelangt ist. Aber er wandelt sie zugleich um, in dem er aufs strengste die Grenze fuer die Gnosis zieht (vgl. Kap. 8), und zudem der Inhalt der Weisheit fuer die Vollkommenen bei ihm ein voellig anderer ist als in der Mystik: es ist die endzeitliche Erloesung durch Christus. —Unter den Herrschern dieser Welt, zu deren Weisheit die goettliche Weisheit in Gegensatz steht, sind nicht menschliche Herrscher, sondern ueberirdische widergoettliche Gewalten, Engelmaechte, denen die alte Welt untersteht, zu begreifen . . . . Paulus lebt in der grossen Weltenstunde, da Gott das Geheimnis seines Heilswillens enthueilt (Kol. 1:26; Eph. 3:3-9). Einerseits ist die Weisheit Gottes sein vorzeitlichen, vorweltlicher Ratschluss, andererseits aber bezieht sie sich auf das Ende der Dinge: zur Verherrlichung der Erwaehlten ist sie bestimmt. Sie hat also ihren Gegenstand in der kommenden Welt, in der Vollendungsoffenbarung Christi (Schlatte). Diese letzten Dinge sind Geheimnisse Gottes; nur er selber kann sie offenbaren. So ist die paulinische Weisheit ein Wissen, das von dem kommenden Handeln Gottes spricht, von den Geschehnissen, die die alte Welt verwandeln werden. Zu ihr vermoegen sich nicht einmal die Herrscher dieser Welt zu erheben, weil sie mit der alten Weltzeit vernichtet werden.

Paul continues that the wisdom contained in his preaching is a secret and hidden wisdom which God before-ordained for our glory πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων; v. 8: "which was not known by the rulers τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. For if they knew, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". Wendland<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>H. Wendland, Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

says that the rulers referred to are the evil angels. This explanation, he says, would fit the world outlook of Paul on the Κόσμος. The evil angels are God's creatures, created by the mediatorship of Christ, Col. 1:15f. They did not know the plan of God's salvation or else they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Over these evil angels Christ's victory begins. This is also why Paul calls Christ the "Lord of Glory" in Rom. 8:38; Col. 2:15; Eph. 1:21; 6:12. The present author prefers to believe that the rulers of this aeon are not the evil angels but rather all sinful flesh. In this verse Paul describes them as being responsible for crucifying Jesus. It would be very unacceptable to suppose that Jesus, praying from the cross that God would forgive His crucifiers, was praying for the evil angels. Therefore we must again on the basis of Paul's reference here describe the old aeon as sinful, the evil angels included. It can be either a temporal or a spatial designation.

Again in I Cor. 3:18 Paul states that the wisdom of this aeon must become void to man before man can become wise. "Let no one deceive himself; if anyone thinks he is wise among you ἐν τῷ σοφίᾳ τούτου let him become a fool, in order that he may become wise". The two wisdoms are mutually exclusive. Wendland says<sup>8</sup>: "von der eingebildeten falschen Weisheit (dieser Welt) geht der Weg zur wahren (goettlichen) Weisheit allein ueber die Torheit". Paul uses "this aeon" synonymously with "this Κόσμος", as is shown from v. 19: "For the wisdom τοῦ Κόσμου τούτου is vain before God".

Paul intensifies his description of the power of this aeon. He says in II Cor. 4:4" . . . ὁ ἄνους τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου blinded the minds of the unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel

<sup>8</sup>H. Wendland, Ibid., p. 25

of the glory of Christ, which is the image of God". Wendland<sup>9</sup> says:

. . . jetzt noch der Satan wider Gottes Werk streitet und ihm Macht ueber Menschen gegeben ist. Den Satan bezeichnet Paulus hier mit einer ueberaus scharfen Formel all den 'Gott dieser Weltzeit'. Damit ist erstens sein Gegensatz zu Gott, zweitens seine Herrschermacht ueber die alte Welt, endlich die Vergaenglichkeit seiner Herrschaft zusammen mit dieser Weltzeit ausgedrueckt. Mit dem Letzten ist schon gesagt, dass der Ausdruck durchaus nicht einen 'Dualismus' in dem Sinne bedeutet, als ob der Satan gleichmaechtig und gleichberechtigt Gott gegenueberstuende; deswegen kann auch von 'persisch-gnostischem Dithelismus' (Glaube an das Gegenueber eines boesen und eines guten Gottes) hier keine Rede sein.

Stoeckhardt<sup>10</sup> also speaks of Satan as being the "god of this aeon". So then the old aeon is very real for Paul. The forces controlling it are powerful, tempting and deceiving, causing people not to be able to recognize the light of salvation in the gospel, which is Christ. This power is ultimately Satanic in nature, emanating from Satan.

Paul also speaks of the present aeon in Eph. 1:21. Here Christ is "above all rules and authorities and powers and lordships and every name named not only ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι". In this passage Paul does not expressly associate evil with the present aeon. The purpose of the verse is to stress Christ's supremacy over everything. The present aeon is undoubtedly temporal here. Ewald<sup>11</sup> says: "Αἰὼν hat natuerlich hier durchaus den Charakter eines 'Zeitbegriffs'".

The last use of ὁ αἰὼν ὁὗτος by Paul, at least commonly considered to be its equivalent, is the reference in Gal. 1:4: "so that He (Christ) might deliver us ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πορνείου according to the will of God . . ." Zahn<sup>12</sup> comments:

<sup>10</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 558

<sup>11</sup>P. Ewald, Epheserbrief, Th. Zahn, ed., op. cit., p. 103

<sup>12</sup>Th. Zahn, Brief an die Galater, op. cit., p. 37f.

Was Pl sonst ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος oder ὁ νῦν αἰὼν nennt bezeichnet er hier als ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐνεστώς. Da αἰὼν bei Pl so wenig wie irgendwo sonst aufgehoert hat, ein Zeitbegriff zu sein, und auch in seiner Uebertragung auf die innerhalb der durch αἰὼν bezeichneten Periode sich fortbewegende Welt, im Unterschied von κόσμος, die Welt als zeitlich verlaufende, den Weltlauf bedeutet, so spricht der zweite und dritte der genannten Ausdruecke den Gegensatz des gegenwaertigen Weltlaufs zu einem zukuenftigen nur noch deutlicher aus, als es auch schon durch οὗτος geschieht, welches bei Pl gelegentlich ebenso, wie bei Jesus und den juedischen Zeitgenossen, ὁ νῦν als ausgesprochenen Gegensatz bei sich hat. Das Urteil, dass dieser gegenwaertige Weltlauf ein boeser sei, welches das praedikativ gemeinte und daher artikellose παινποῖς ausspricht, liegt nicht nur aller Hoffnung auf eine zukuenftige Welt und Weltordnung, sondern auch aller Verkuendigung einer waehrend dieses Weltlaufs sich vollziehenden Erloesung zu Grunde. Dieser ist ein boeser, solange und insoweit in ihm nicht der ewige und urspruengliche Wille Gottes allein, sondern auch widergoettlicher Wille sich verwirklicht. In wie hohem Grade dies nach Pl wie nach Jesus (Bd I, 157. 459) dermalen der Fall ist, und dass dieser unerfreuliche Zustand ebenso das physische wie das ethische Leben der gegenwaertigen Welt umfasst, mag man aus Stellen wie II Kr. 4:4; 12:7; Eph. 6:11-18; Kl 1:13 entnehmen. Auch I Jo. 5, 19 waere ihm nicht zu stark gewesen.

Burton<sup>13</sup> agrees with Zahn that this is manifestly equivalent to the more general usage ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος. While here it is definitely called evil, the evil is only implied elsewhere. It is primarily a phase of time denoting the present period of the world's history as distinguished from the coming age.

Three times Paul uses a similar phrase: ὁ νῦν αἰὼν. In I Tim. 6:17 he says: "The wealthy ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰὼνι exhort not to be conceited nor trust in uncertain wealth, but in God who gives to us all wealth for enjoying". The wealth again is perishable, uncertain, and obscure. As the following chapter will illustrate, wealth belongs to the Jetztnoch things of the present aeon. More emphatically the evil connotation is present in II Tim. 4:10: "For Demas, who loved τὸν νῦν αἰὼνα, has

<sup>13</sup>E. Burton, International Critical Commentary, Galations (New York: Chas. Scribner and Sons, 1920), p. 113.

forsaken me". And in Titus 2:12 Paul warns the Christians to whom the grace of God for salvation has appeared to learn that "having denied impiety and cosmic lusts we should live soberly and righteously and piously ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι". As Joachim Jeremias<sup>14</sup> points out, Paul is speaking of a Christian life which is always motivated by gratitude for the grace of God. So here, the present aeon is only the period in which the Christian lives; he has no internal connections with it.

In conclusion, one notices that the present aeon, though not always described as such specifically, is yet always evil, uncertain, changing, and sinful. It is governed, as Nygren<sup>15</sup> shows, by Wrath, Sin and Death. To human beings it is enticing, seeking their destruction, blinding men to the truth, containing a wisdom of selfishness, pride, and self-righteousness. But in the mind of the Apostle who describes the old aeon so, there is always a contrasted aeon. As to the duration of the present aeon, we can only infer that it is synonymous with the duration of God's long-suffering toward sin and evil.

#### B. The Coming Aeon

Five times in the N. T. there is a direct reference made to the other, coming aeon. Paul refers to it twice. In Eph. 1:21 he says that Christ now sits at the right hand of God "far above all rules and authorities and powers and lordships and every name named not only in the present aeon but

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<sup>14</sup>J. Jeremias, Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Timotheus and Titus (Goettingen: Bardenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1947), p. 59f.

<sup>15</sup>A. Nygren, supra.

also ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι. Stoeckhardt<sup>16</sup>, quoting Haupt, describes the nature and time of the coming aeon:

Offenbar will Paulus nicht sagen, dass in Zukunft andere Geisteswesen existieren wuerden als jetzt, welche aber auch Christo untergeordnet seien, sondern er will sagen, dass weder in der irdischen noch in der ueberirdischen Welt man irgendeinen Namen auffinden kaenne, der Christo gleichstaende. Der Ausdruck ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι ist nur darum fuer die hoehere Welt gewaehlt, weil fuer uns der Eintritt in dieselbe zukuenftig ist, obschon sie an sich schon jetzt existiert. Wenn im Hebraeerbrief die himmlische Welt einerseits als sogar fuer uns schon vorhanden hingestellt wird (12,12), und andererseits dort dieses selbe himmlische Jerusalem als die πόλις μέλλουσα bezeichnet wird (13,14), ja wenn 6,5 die Leser die Kraefte der zukuenftigen Welt schon zu kosten bekommen, so ist ganz klar, dass der Verfasser unter dem ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι einfach die hoehere Welt versteht, und wenn der Zusammenhang also in unserer Stelle auf dieselbe Verallgemeinerung des Begriffs fuehrt, wird gegen die Annahme derselben nichts einzuwenden sein.

Paul again specifically refers to the coming aeon in Eph. 2:7: "in order that He (Christ) might show ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπιρρομαίνοις in superabundant riches of his grace in which He has been gracious to us in Christ Jesus". The precontext speaks of the making alive and saving by the grace of God of a disobedient sinner. On this Stoeckhardt<sup>17</sup> says:

Das neue Leben der Wiedergeburt laeuft aus in das ewige Leben. Unter τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπιρρομαίνοις eigentlich den herankommenden Zeiten, die im Anzug sind, haben wir "die um ihrer Endlosigkeit willen pluzzeit, also mit der schliesslichen Offenbarung des Zornes Gottes eintritt" (Hofmann), zu verstehen.

So of the reality of the coming aeon there can be no doubt. But the crucial question, to which brief allusions have already been made, is: What marks the change between the present and the coming aeon? All the commentators consulted by the author have agreed upon the two aeon teaching

<sup>16</sup> G. Stoeckhardt, Epheserbrief (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910), p. 107.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

in Paul. But when does the coming aeon begin, or what is the theological significance of this teaching? The following are some of the leading views.

### C. Jesus Christ, the Turning Point

Sasse<sup>18</sup> points out that the "spätjuedische" apocalyptic writers together with the pre-Christian gnostics taught that the אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ was the period of time lasting for the duration of the earth. The אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ, according to their teaching, was to begin with the coming Messiah's earthly reign. This Jewish view predicted that the coming aeon would begin with the Messiah who would at the same time proclaim judgment upon the earth. The times immediately preceding this event would be evil, just as they were experiencing at that time. They believed in only one parousia, at which time the Messiah would bring His glorious kingdom to the earthly Jerusalem, and peace would reign eternally.

Cullmann<sup>19</sup> points out that the Jewish three-fold division is the basis for the N. T. two aeon teaching, namely, the present and the coming. The difference is not that the present aeon must be understood as temporal and the coming aeon eternal (timeless), but the difference between the two aeons is the "Geschehen", which, for the present aeon is the Fall. The fall into sin did not create the time element but rather characterizes the present aeon as sinful. The event which marks the transition to the coming aeon is the conquest over the evil powers which characterize the present aeon.

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<sup>18</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>19</sup>O. Cullmann, op. cit., pp. 39-43.

According to Cullmann, there is also a temporal difference between the two aeons. But this difference is one of limitation. The present aeon is limited from both ends, the beginning the Creation and the end the final judgment. The coming aeon is limited only on one end, the beginning. The beginning is the event which the Jewish apocalypse refers to, namely, the Messiah. The coming aeon has no end and in this sense is eternal.

Cullmann outlines his division of the two aeons thus:<sup>20</sup>

1. die Zeit in ihrer ganzen unendlichen Ausdehnung, die nach vorwaerts und nach rueckwaerts unbegrenzt, also "Ewigkeit" ist,

2. die begrenzte Zeit, die zwischen Schoepfung und Endgeschehen liegt, also mit dem "gegenwaertigen", nach der andern unbegrenzten Zeitstrecken, und zwar

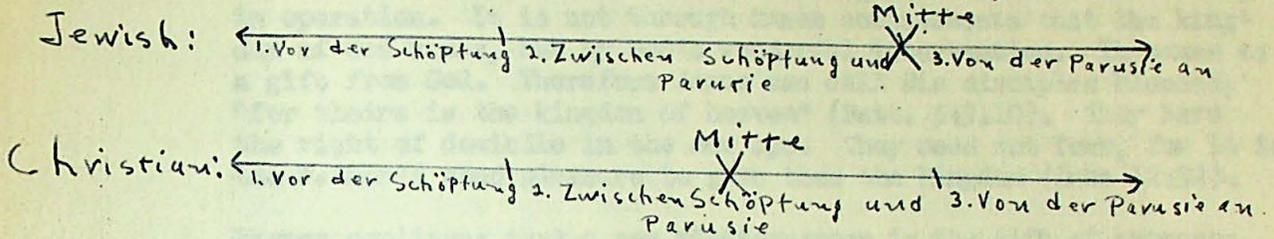
a) (ἐκ τοῦ ἀρχαίου) die vor der Schoepfung liegende, die nach der Seite der Schoepfung zu ein Ende, also eine Grenze hat, dagegen nach rueckwaerts unbegrenzt, unendlich und nur in diesem Sinne ewig ist;

b) die ueber das Ende des gegenwaertigen Aions hinausragende (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαίου) die also im sogenannten Endgeschehen ihren Anfang, also eine Grenze hat, dagegen nach vorwaerts unbegrenzt, unendlich, und nur in diesem Sinne ewig ist.

Now Cullmann shows that the difference between the Biblical "Heilslinie" and the Jewish "Heilslinie" does not lie in variations of this threefold division. Rather, the occurrence of the central event is different. According to the Jewish tradition this central event is the coming of the Messiah which would happen at the end of the created world. From then on the coming aeon would begin. But the Christian "Heilsline" makes its central point between the creation and the second parousia when Christ shall complete His redemptive work, namely, at the resurrection. The present aeon does not terminate with this event, but continues till the second parousia.

<sup>20</sup> Cullmann, Ibid., p. 41f.

Cullmann's graph will illustrate this more clearly<sup>21</sup>:



Ewald<sup>22</sup>, commenting on Eph. 1:21, states:

Die Frage aber, ob die Messianische Zeit noch zum αἰὼν αὐτός oder schon zum αἰὼν ἡλικύου gehören, hat sich fuer das Christliche Bewusstsein damit erledigt, dass die Erscheinung des Messias den Gesamtzustand der Welt Zunaechst noch unveraendert gelassen hat, und ein neuer Aion erst mit der zweiten ἡγεμονία zu erwarten ist.

Nygren<sup>23</sup> brings out the two aeon doctrine of the N. T. first from Jesus' own statements and then from Paul's continuation of this doctrine.

He says:

If there is anything which the newer exegetical study has clearly established, it is the extraordinary significance which the eschatological had for early Christian faith. At the center of Jesus' message stood the proclamation of the kingdom of God and the beginning of the new age. In hope the pious who "looked for the consolation of Israel" had reached forward toward that day when God himself would institute His kingdom and take command. In that tense expectation the proclamation of Jesus is heard, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). When Jesus talks about the kingdom of God, it is no longer a matter of something distant, which shall some time come. "This age" has already reached its end, and "the new age" stands at the door. With Jesus himself the messianic age has arrived. With reference to the messianic prophecy about "a year of grace for the Lord", He could say, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21). That He was "He that should come" is seen in that the messianic signs were already at hand, "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:5). Even if one can at the same time speak of the kingdom of heaven as something that shall come and is approaching, it is nevertheless also

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> P. Ewald, Epheserbrief, the Zahn edition, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>23</sup> A. Nygren, op. cit., pp. 9-12.

a present reality; the forces of the kingdom of heaven are already in operation. It is not through human achievements that the kingdom of God comes, but by God's wonderful intervention. It comes as a gift from God. Therefore Jesus can call His disciples blessed, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3,10). They have the right of domicile in the new age. They need not fear, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32).

Nygren continues that a new righteousness is the gift of entrance into the Kingdom of God, which is the new age. He says:

Therefore it is written, in Matthew 5:20, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven". So inseparably do the new kingdom and the new righteousness belong together.

The inner conflict with Paul was:

If Jesus was the Messiah, the kingdom of God was already at hand. The new age had come. But then the righteousness which had made Paul a persecutor of the Christian community was a false righteousness . . . . Only one like Paul, himself on the contrary way of salvation, the way of righteousness of the law, was capable of making clear for Christianity the new way of salvation which God had opened through Christ, and of setting forth the righteousness of God in its absolute newness.

So Nygren makes justification by faith the central theme of Romans as well as of all theology. However, following the pattern of Adolph Schlatter, he shows how the two aeon teaching embraces justification by faith. In Rom. 5:12-21 Paul abruptly draws an analogy between Adam and Christ. Without explanation Paul takes this parallel to be self-evident, axiomatic, too basic for formal demonstration. In this analogy Nygren says:

Paul does not move from Adam to Christ, but from Christ. In the comparison of the two he is not trying to adduce a unique position for Christ. Had that been his aim, there would be reason for the demand that he defend his logic in making the parallel. But the authority of Christ is to him utterly clear, quite independently of a line of reasoning. Rather is his purpose in such a comparison emphatically to affirm that Christ does occupy a status given Him by God.

Paul thinks in terms of aeons. Two realms stand over against each

other. One is the dominion of death over all that is human, the age of Adam. The other is the dominion of life, the age of Christ. The question to which Paul is here addressing himself is to inquire what it is that has come about because Christ has been given to us. His answer is clear: the new aeon, the aeon of life, has come upon us. Thereby have they who stand with Christ, in faith on Him, been taken out of the dominion of death which overshadows Adam's race. This is the fact which was written to the Colossians (1:13), "He (God) has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son". This is the universal significance of Christ.

The old aeon is under the dominion of death. Every history except the history of the gospel of Christ is a history which reports the story of death. It is a report of the death age. Death rules supreme in this world, whether we speak of physical, spiritual, or eternal death. It is the status of all in this world, the children of Adam.

Nygren continues:

Against this background the meaning of the gospel is seen most clearly. To us who are in bondage to the dominion of the age of death comes the gospel with its message that the new age, the age of life, has burst upon us! As death became the lot of all through one man, Adam, so God now bestows life on us through one man, Christ. Just as Adam stands at the head of the old aeon (ὁ ἀρχὴ αἰῶνος), so Christ stands by reason of His resurrection, as the author and perfecter of the new (ὁ ἀρχὴ ὁ νέου αἰῶνος). As long as men had to look forward toward Him "who was to come", the new aeon could only be called "the coming age". But now, after He has come, it is no longer merely something that is to be. Since the resurrection of Christ the new aeon has become actual fact in our world. Christ stands at the frontier between the two ages, outdating the old and blazing the way for the new. In Christ we belong to the new aeon. In II Corinthians 5:17, Paul expresses this fact thus, "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come".

This same view is shared by Sasse<sup>23</sup> who presents the Christian view of the coming aeon as headed by Christ on the basis of I Cor. 15:20,23:

"But now Christ is raised from the dead, the first of those who had slept.

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<sup>23</sup>H. Sasse, op. cit., p. 207.

And each at his own time: first Christ, then those of Christ at his parousia". And he presents the old aeon, as headed by Adam, on the basis of I. Cor. 15:21,22: "For since through one man came death, also through one man resurrection from the dead. For just as in Adam all died, so also in Christ all will be made alive".

In summary, all the leading commentators are agreed upon the three basic premises discussed in this chapter: first, that the present aeon in Paul is always evil. Its time is parallel to God's forbearance of evil, i. e. from the fall till judgment day. Secondly, the coming aeon is a period of time which begins with the first parousia and extends into the unlimited future. Hence it is here even now, since the resurrection of Christ, which marks the victory over the evil forces of the old aeon. Thus, finally, Jesus Christ marks the turning point.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME RELATED TERMS

#### I. ῥῆμα (ἄρτι, ἕως)

Considerable light is thrown on the question as to when the ῥῆμα ἄρτι begins through a study of the frequent term: \_\_\_\_\_. This temporal designation in the N. T. follows two general ideas. First, it is God's selected moment according to His οἰκονομία in which He achieves His purposes. And secondly, it is a God-appointed period during which men are either saved or lost, accept or reject the Gospel. This latter has also been called the "Redemptive" ῥῆμα<sup>1</sup>.

##### A. God's Moment

Luke 5:10 illustrates the use of ῥῆμα as a point of time (ἄρτι ἕως) designated by God in which He achieves His purpose: "And Jesus said to Simon, Fear not, ἄρτι ἕως ῥῆμα you will catch men." Again Paul in Corinth, after the Jews rejected his message, said: (Acts 18:6) "ἄρτι ἕως ῥῆμα I will go to the gentiles". Similar usages are found in Jn. 13:31; 16:5; 17:13. It is a specific time with Luke in 12:52: "For there will be ἄρτι ἕως ῥῆμα five in one house divided". It is also the end of Christ's humiliation and the beginning of His exaltation in John 12:27ff.

##### B. The "Redemptive" ῥῆμα

The second idea conveyed by the ῥῆμα in the N. T., namely, a God-

<sup>1</sup> Staehlin's article in Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), v. 4, pp.1106-1117 is followed to a large extent for outline and grouping of passages.

appointed period during which men are saved or damned, is the more significant for the purpose of this study. To this "redemptive υἱ" Paul frequently refers, and also in direct relation to the two-aeon teaching.

1. It brings the event of Christ up to date:

The sacrifice of Christ happened once (ἅπασι) and long ago (ἄνωθεν Rom. 5:8, punctiliar aorist). Nevertheless, Paul brings the effect of this sacrifice to the present time by saying, Rom. 5:9: "Much rather than, being justified υἱ by His blood we will be saved through Him from the Wrath". Again in Col. 1:21,22 the Apostle says that at one time (πότε) they were strangers and enemies in their mind by their wicked works, "υἱ ὁ (Christ) has reconciled them in His body of flesh through death". So also in II Tim. 1:10 the grace of God was given to men πρὸς Χριστὸν δικαίωσιν, but υἱ is manifested through the appearance of our Savior. Also the revelation of the mystery which was veiled in silence from Χριστὸν δικαίωσιν is manifested υἱ, and through the writings of the prophets is made known to all nations, Rom. 16:26. The writer to the Hebrews sums up this thought when he concludes that if Christ were a High Priest offering sacrifices after the manner of human priests, He would have been compelled to suffer often from the foundation of the world: "υἱ ὅτι ἅπασι ἵνα συντελέσῃ τὸν δικαίωσιν He has appeared to put away the sin through His sacrifice", Heb. 9:26. In all these usages the υἱ retains its full power for the present to the Christians.

In Rom. 11:30f, the υἱ stands as the dividing point between believing and being lost: "So also you ἠἔθεσαν were disobedient to God, υἱ ὅτι you received mercy because of their disobedience; so also these υἱ

have not believed, that through the mercy shown to you they also might obtain mercy νῦν". Also in II Pet. 2:25 the νῦν stands as the dividing line in a life at one time straying and now returned to the Shepherd.

2. νῦν between the first and second παρουσία:

Staehlin<sup>2</sup> points out that every νῦν in the O. T. points to a new "Einst". Jeremiah 4:12 says: "νῦν δὲ I will speak judgment against them"; or Is. 33:10: "νῦν I will arise, says the Lord, νῦν I will be glorified, νῦν I will ascend". But the O. T. does not speak of judgment and redemption in the future only, rather, it pronounces judgment and redemption for the present. The νῦν does this by reaching into the future and making the redemption of the first παρουσία and the judgment of the second παρουσία apply now. So Is. 3:8 says that the glory of Jerusalem should νῦν be brought low, and Is. 48:7: "νῦν it is made and not of old, and these things you did not hear in former days . . ." So then in the Old as well as in the New Testament the νῦν marks the decision between accepting salvation or being condemned.

If the νῦν designates a period in which men accept salvation or are condemned, it then must fall between the two παρουσία, the first of which was redemption and the second which will be judgment. That is why, as Staehlin remarks, the νῦν of the O. T. points to an "Einst", i. e. because it is before the first παρουσία.

Paul speaks of ὁ νῦν αἰὼν on three occasions, as noticed earlier, to refer to the same period as ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος. Also in Gal. 4:25 ὁ νῦν αἰὼν τελευτήσκει is spoken of as a corollary to the present aeon, or

<sup>2</sup>Staehlin, op. cit., p. 1107.

of the Jerusalem which is below in contrast to the coming, which is above<sup>3</sup>. Again II Pet. 3:7 speaks of οὐρανὸν ἑτοιμασμένον καὶ γῆν. These instances further lead one to believe that each ἄνω is a moment "Zeiteinschnitt" between the two parousias, looking over both. As such, in the N. T. times since the resurrection of Christ, it is, in relation to the old aeon a Jetztnoch and in relation to the coming aeon a Jetztschon.

### 3. Jetztnoch:

When ἄνω is understood as a Jetztnoch, it refers to the old aeon. Paul looks back upon the evil aeon and says: "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning and travailing together ἀλλὰ τὸν ἄνω (Rom. 8:22) because they are still in the service of corruption", v. 21. This groaning extends to the Christians also, even to the Holy Spirit, as Nygren<sup>4</sup> also shows, in His intercession for the saints. This ἄνω has been going on since creation: John 5:17: "My Father works ἄνω ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς". Those who hate their brother are ἐν τῷ σκοτεινῷ ἄνω ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς, I Jn. 2:9.

The dark of the Jetztnoch is part of the essence of the old aeon, which is evil. Jesus teaches that this ἄνω does not have full, consummated salvation when He says: (Lk. 6:21,25.): "Blessed are those who hunger ἄνω, for they will be filled. Woe to you who are filled up ἄνω, for you will hunger." This Jetztnoch is a time when the disciples of Jesus will have to suffer the battle: (Lk. 22:26): "ἄνω ἄνω he that hath a purse, let him take it and likewise his scrip and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one". Paul also says: (Rom. 8:18):

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Th. Zahn, Galaterbrief, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>4</sup>Nygren, op. cit., p. 335.

"For I reckon that the sufferings του νυν κλιθου are not worth comparing with the coming glory."

This Jetztnoch period, together with all things, is under Christ's feet. But the writer to the Hebrews informs us: (2:8) "νυν ει we do not yet see all things subjected to him". Rather, as we can infer from Eph. 2:2, Christ permits the spirit which νυν works effectually in the sons of disobedience to rule the Jetztnoch. And the "sons of disobedience" are the citizens of the Jetztnoch, which the Spirit, Satan, rules. These are the same "sons of disobedience" mentioned in Rom. 11:31 of whom the prophets already spoke in the O. T. This is why the Jews understood neither the Scriptures, as Paul mentions, II Cor. 3:14: "But their minds were blinded; for αχρι this day the same veil remains during the reading of the old covenant"; nor did they know Christ: "νυν we know that you have a demon" (Jn. 8:52).

The Christians, too, have part in the Jetztnoch of the world. Paul says, Gal. 2:20, that he (ενω) no longer lives himself but Christ lives in him; "and the life I νυν live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God". The σαρκ is the sinful flesh. I Pet. 1:8 applies to all Christians for none have seen Christ: "in whom (Christ) απει αυ αρωτες yet believing". Their spiritual sight is still dim: (I Cor. 13:12): For we see απει ει επιτηρου εν αριστοι", and "απει I know in part". Christians suffer more now, for they hunger νυν Luke 6:21, and νυν they have sorrow, Jn. 16:22. In general, the entire Christian cross is a product of the Jetztnoch as we see in passages as II Cor. 4:11.13; I Pet. 1:6; Rom. 8:12.

In the midst of all the troubles of the Jetztnoch, there yet remains





The same new relationship with God is spoken of in Col. 1:21: "And you were Πατέ strangers and enemies . . . ὑποὶ δὲ He reconciled you in His body of flesh . . ." And in Rom. 11:31: "Πατέ you were disobedient, ὑποὶ δὲ you obtained mercy".

When Paul speaks of his gentile converts, this once/now contrast is more pronounced. In Eph. 2:12: "For you were τῷ καταπέ ἐκείνῳ without Christ, being strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope and godless in the world; ὑποὶ δὲ in Christ Jesus you, were Πατέ far, were brought near by the blood of Christ". Again the gentile converts are referred to especially in Gal. 4:8: "But τοτέ not knowing God you served those things which are, by nature, not gods; ὑποὶ δὲ knowing God . . ." This service in former times was the gentile cultic worship, but after the ὑποὶ they know, and are known of, God.<sup>9</sup>

This new relationship with God which is established as the Christian enters the Jetzt period also effects a new life. In Rom. 6:20-22 Paul says that formerly (τοτέ) his readers were slaves of sin, and the fruits which they had τοτέ they ὑποὶ ashamed of, for the end of them was death. "ὑποὶ δὲ being free from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit in holiness and the end eternal life". And in Rom. 5:8 we were sinners, but ὑποὶ being justified by His blood we will be saved. In Rom. 7:1 the law has lordship over man for whatever time he lives; but then in v. 6 the Apostle exclaims: "ὑποὶ δὲ we are released from the working of the law". And man being free from sin and the law, by the gracious inter-

<sup>9</sup>Ch. Zahn, Galaterbrief, op. cit., p. 206.

vention of God in Christ, righteousness results, as the Apostle says, (Rom. 3:21): "οὐκ ἔστι without law the righteousness of God has appeared". And Rom. 7:6 concludes that if we are free from the law, then we will serve in newness of Spirit and not the oldness of the letter. In other words, the Apostle shows that everything that ἦτορ was κατὰ γράμματα is now changed. In II Cor. 5:16: "So that ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν we know nothing according to flesh; even if we knew (imperf.) Christ according to the flesh, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐπίσταμεθα do we know him". Also according to Col. 1:21 the Christian's works are no longer ἠερέθησαν, but the Christians are νῦν ἁγίασται. Also all the heathen lusts, adultery, uncleanness in which ἠερέθησαν the Christians walked and lived, he kills νῦν, according to Col. 3:5-8. Also the fruits of sin which they ἠερέθησαν produced, but which they are νῦν ashamed, they do not produce, Rom. 6:21. Paul further says, (Eph. 5:8): "For you were ἠερέθησαν darkness, νῦν ἔστε light in the Lord; walk as children of light". Finally Paul also answers the question as to the final judgment (Rom. 8:1): "Therefore νῦν there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus". Also the wrath of God which is now withheld from all, will not be pronounced on those persons who are νῦν justified on the last day, Rom. 5:9.

The Jetzttschon also indicates a new knowledge and spiritual understanding. This knowledge deals especially with the mystery of God of which Paul frequently speaks. Col. 1:26: "The mystery which had been hidden ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν — νῦν ἔστι ἐφανερωθῆναι to his saints". The mystery is, as Paul relates in the following verse: "ὅτι ἡ ἐλπίς ἡμῶν ἐν ἁγίοις, the hope of glory". This is the event which Paul refers to as happening during the νῦν. Similar usage is found in Eph. 3:5, where we read that the mystery "in other generations was not known



ren of God but it does not yet appear what we shall be". This idea of a fulfillment of a promise of God in the present time and again in the future runs through the entire New Testament. Staehlin<sup>10</sup> calls it a double fulfillment, as illustrated in Eph. 1:13f.

#### 5. Degrees of the N. T. ἄνωγ:

In a few instances Paul uses the ἄνωγ to express the idea of a recurrence of hours, according to Staehlin. In II Thess. 2:5f Paul is referring to the Anti-Christ: "Don't you remember that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And ἄνωγ you know what withholds, that he might be revealed in his own time". And in Rom. 13:11: "For ἄνωγ our salvation is nearer than when we believed". And in I Cor. 3:2: "I fed you milk, not meat; for you are not yet grown up. But neither ἄνωγ are you grown up, for you are still fleshly . . ." While these passages, especially II Thess. 2:5, all present some difficulty of interpretation, the author fails to see the thought of a recurrence of hours in them as does Staehlin. Wohlenberg<sup>11</sup> quotes Hofmann who says that the ἄνωγ of II Thess. 2:5f means a "Jetztzeit" in contrast to the future time, the time of the Man of Sin.

#### 6. The Meaning in the Life of the Individual Christian:

The apostle Paul frequently refers to the events of his life which he experienced before his conversion with πρίν, and the period after his conversion by ἄνωγ. And undoubtedly ἄνωγ was a very significant word for him, to judge by the frequency and the manner with which he used it. There is no indication that he associated the same meaning with the term

<sup>10</sup> Staehlin, op. cit., p. 1113.

<sup>11</sup> G. Wohlenberg, Thessalonicherbrief, Th. Zahn, ed. (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1905), p. 144.

as certain Holiness church bodies do today who say that the exact day, hour, and even minute of conversion must be known. For instance, in Gal. 1:23 Paul says: "But only did they hear that he who persecuted us πάλαι, ἔτι preaches the faith which πάλαι he was destroying". The ἔτι denotes a longer time than just a moment. It refers to his whole new life in II Cor. 5:16f: "So that we ἔτι ἔτι ἔτι know nothing according to the flesh; and if we knew Christ according to the flesh, yet ἔτι no longer do we know Him. If therefore anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature—the old things passed away, behold, they have become new". Bachmann<sup>12</sup> says that by ἔτι ἔτι ἔτι Paul does not refer his readers to the "Unterschied zwischen Pl und andere Leuten, sondern auf den zwischen Einst und Jetzt in seinem eigenen Leben". And the onetime life ἡ παλαιὰ ζωὴ which he mentions refers to his life while "under sin", as in Rom. 6:14. Paul further describes the condition of the ἔτι in Rom. 7:6: "ἔτι ἔτι we are delivered from the law, by dying to that in which we were held, that we might serve in newness of spirit and not oldness of letter".

Paul transfers this once/now condition of his to the lives of all his readers. In Rom. 6:21 he states it is a general truth: "What fruit, then, had you ἔτι for which ἔτι you are ashamed? for the end of them is death. ἔτι ἔτι being free from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life".

Staehlin<sup>13</sup> concludes with this summation:

Das NT. bindet also den Glauben gleich stark an Vergangenheit, Ge-

<sup>12</sup>Ph. Bachmann, Zweite Brief an die Korinther, Jahn, ed., op. cit., pp. 256-260

<sup>13</sup>Staehlin, op. cit., pp. 1116-1117.

genwart und Zukunft . . . Wer keine Hoffnung hat, steht nicht im Christenglauben—aber wer nicht in der Gegenwart des Christus steht, der hat auch keinen Grund zur Hoffnung. Erst wenn der Durchbruch der jetzt geglaubten Wirklichkeit in die Sichtbarkeit und damit ihre Vollendung eintritt, dann wird das ΤΟΤΕ von I Cor. 13:12 in einem neuen νῦν, in einem wahrhaften nunc aeternum aufgehen.

Briefly concluding, then, this νῦν which is designated as the "redemptive" νῦν, which is contrasted with the ΤΟΤΕ, the Jetzttschon as opposite the Jetzttsnoch, is a further answer to the crucial question: when does the coming aeon begin? It begins νῦν, Jetzttschon, when a man is ἐκ Χριστοῦ and has become a καὶνὴ κτίσις (II Cor. 5:16f). The change gives man power to serve God in newness of spirit (Rom. 7:6), to perform deeds which are fruits whose end is τὴν δόξαν (Rom. 6:21f). It gives man an insight into the eternal mystery of God, true spiritual wisdom. While the Jetzttsnoch is parallel in time to the old aeon, i. e. the fall into sin till the second parousia, or the duration of the forbearance of God, the Jetzttschon begins when man accepts Christ and endures until the Jenseits, beyond the second parousia.

II. καιρός

καιρός is another temporal designation of the N. T. which gives further insight into the teaching of the two aeons. Cullmann<sup>1</sup> says that καιρός has as its characteristic quality the idea of "Zeitpunkt" while αἰών is a "Zeitdauer" of limited or unlimited length. The best modern parallel to καιρός is contained in the term "D-day", he says. For it is a moment long previously planned and spoken of, the exact time when the moment will come being unknown. The classic usage of καιρός is in Solomon's Ecclesiastes: (chapter 3) "To all things an appointed time (χρόνος) and a καιρός to all deeds under the heaven." And then the Preacher continues to ennumerate various καιράι in the life of man.

The καιρός, under the modern word picture of "D-day", must always be understood as a moment known to and planned by God from eternity. However, when this καιρός of God appears to man, he frequently does not recognize it or he has the power willfully to reject it. By doing this, man makes his own καιράι. This is one usage in the N. T. On several occasions it is used as a period or season of time, short or long. It is these two usages of καιράι which will be considered.<sup>2</sup>

A. The καιρός as the Foreordained, Decisive Moment of God.

Foremost of this is the καιρός in which God gave His Son to become incarnate. Jesus himself testifies to this fact in Mark 1:15: "And Jesus went into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God and saying that ἡ καιρός has been fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is near; repent and believe in

<sup>1</sup>O. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 33

<sup>2</sup>G. Dellinger's article in Kittel, op. cit., v. 3, pp. 460-463, is used as a basis for this section.

the Gospel". Immediately one notices that there is nothing speculative or intellectual about this idea of God's καιρός, but that it is given to men as an invitation to accept the Gospel in the καιρός of God. This passage would also indicate that this καιρός is a fulfillment of the O. T. prophecy of the gift of God. Again Jesus tells the spiritual leaders of the Jews that they can predict the weather by discerning the signs of nature, but "how do you not discern τὸν καιρὸν ἐν ταύτῃ", Luke 12:56. "This time" is the time of Jesus' Appearance in the flesh as the Messiah of Israel. And the signs of καιρός αὐτός of God's grace is the miracle of faith for salvation. Also this reference to God's καιρός calls for a decision on the part of man to accept or reject the salvation of the Messiah.

The Christian who has accepted the καιρός of God's grace now lives as though each moment of time were a new καιρός. Paul, after telling the Roman readers that love is the fulfilling of the Law, continues: (13:11) "Besides this, you know τὸν καιρὸν, that the hour for you to arise out of sleep is already here". He means, continue in deeds of brotherly love because of God's καιρός. God has entrusted His καιρός to the Christian so that the Christian, as a spiritual man, may recognize, know, and carry out God's will. So Paul says: (Gal. 6:10) "As we have therefore καιρὸν, let us do good to all men . . ." This καιρός must be considered a sacred trust by the Christian. According to Eph. 5:16 the Christian should walk as "redeeming τὸν καιρὸν, because the days are evil". That is how the Christian lives a prudent life. And also in Col. 4:5: "In wisdom conduct yourselves toward those without, redeeming τὸν καιρὸν".

Jesus Himself in his earthly life was under God's καιρός. He says:

(Jn. 7:6.8.) "ὁ καιρὸς ὁ ἴστος is not yet present, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς καιρὸς ὁ πάντοτε is always ready. You go up to the feast; I do not yet go up to this feast, for my καιρὸς is not yet fulfilled". Here Jesus is referring to the hour of His death and sacrifice as being God's καιρὸς for Him. The distinction between the καιρὸς of Jesus and that of all disciples is that for Jesus there was but one, while for the disciples there are many καιροί.

Paul yet denotes many other events in the "Heilsgeschichte" by καιρὸς. The Man of Sin will make his appearance "ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ καιρῷ", II Thess. 2:6. He indirectly refers to the Judgment Day when he says: (I Cor. 4:5) "So then judge nothing πρὸ καιρῷ until the Lord should come". And both the ἡμέραι and καιροί are uncertain; the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, and so Paul has no need to write more about this to the Thessalonians (5:1). Even Paul's own death he describes: (II Tim. 4:6) "For already I am sacrificed, and ὁ καιρὸς of my departure is near".

God's chief καιρὸς was the incarnation. The purpose of the incarnation was that men through Jesus' reconciliation might believe and be saved. Jesus Himself referred to His passive obedience as the specific moment of His καιρὸς. As concluded in the previous chapter, the victory over sin and the devil marks the beginning of the αἰὼν ἁγίου. So God's καιρὸς marks the beginning of the new aeon.

Paul also refers to the second παρουσία as God's καιρὸς, e. g. I Cor. 4:5. This remains the unknown time when also the αἰὼν αὐτῶν will terminate. Until that time God's καιροί are given to men as an invitation to enter the coming aeon. These invitations will continue

until that last great καιρός, the time when the αἰὼν αὐτός ends and therewith the καιροί of God end.

The time between these two καιροί of God is the time during which the Gospel is preached to men. It is spoken of as the ἡνὶ καιρὸς in Rom. 3:26: "during the forbearance of God that He might show His justice ἐν τῷ ἡνὶ καιρῷ". The whole lifetime of an individual is spoken of as a momentary καιρός during which he is given opportunity to prepare in I Cor. 7:29: "And this I say, brethern, ὁ καιρὸς is short: it remains in order that both those who have wives be as though they had not". Also the time before the second καιρὸς of God is a time of suffering for the Christian due to the conflict between the old and the new aeons. Paul speaks of this in Rom. 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the ἡνὶ καιροῦ are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us". So we could refer to frequent uses of καιρός by Paul which all point to the second great καιρὸς of God. Due to the troubles of the old aeon the believers yearn for that καιρὸς to come.

B. καιρός as a shorter or longer period of time.

Paul tells the Ephesians to pray ἐν ἁρκτὶ καιρῷ by the Spirit, (6:18) when he refers to the constant inner prayer life of the Christian. Our Lord in Luke 21:36 warns all Christians to "watch and pray ἐν ἁρκτὶ καιρῷ in order that you may be worthy to flee from all the things to come". In Rom. 9:9 Paul says: "This is the word of promise: κατὰ τοῦ καιροῦ τούτου I will come and Sarah will have a son". In the preceding examples, καιρός might possibly be taken also as a point of time; it is clearly just a longer period of time, a season, in Gal. 4:10: "You observe days and months and καιροὺς and years".

It seems to be an indefinite term with Paul in I Thess. 2:17:

"And we, brethren, being taken from you πρὸς καιρὸν ἔλας in face, not in heart, strove more exceedingly to see your face with many desires".

Also in I Cor. 7:5 Paul uses καιρὸς as a period of time, not definitely known: "Defraud not one another, except it should be with consent πρὸς καιρὸν".

III. κόσμος in PaulA. Parallels and Differences between κόσμος οὗτος and αἰὼν οὗτος

In I Cor. 3:18f Paul identifies the αἰὼν οὗτος and κόσμος οὗτος. He says: "If anyone thinks that he is wise among you ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, let him become a fool in order that he may become wise. For the wisdom τῶν κόσμων τούτων is folly before God". The same evil connotation is ascribed to the κόσμος as to the present evil aeon of Gal. 1:4 in I Cor. 5:10 "Not entirely with the fornicators τῶν κόσμων τούτων, or with the greedy, or extortioners, or idolators; for then you must indeed go out of the κόσμος". The present κόσμος is also perishable and fleeting, as described in I Cor. 7:31: "And they that use τὸν κόσμον must do so as not abusing it, for the fashion τῶν κόσμων τούτων passes away".

The thought that κόσμος usually designates a spatial realm while αἰὼν a temporal period is confined by the phrase in Eph. 2:2: "In which once you walked according to τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου". But the similarity of the two terms is again noticeable when Paul speaks of τῶν ἀρκάντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου in I Cor. 2:6,8, while John 12:31 and 16:11 speaks of ἀρκων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. There are many more parallels between Paul's use and John's use of κόσμος οὗτος which would make an interesting study in itself; but that is beyond the scope of this study.

The similarity between Paul's use of κόσμος οὗτος and αἰὼν οὗτος is evident from the above. The differences are these:<sup>1</sup> Since κόσμος ἡλικῶν is not used at any time, it is inferred that it could

<sup>1</sup> H. Sasse, Kittel, op. cit., v. 3, pp. 884-894 passim.

not be used like the πῶς οὗτος and πῶς αὐτὸς as a translation of the Jewish Apocalyptic terms אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ and אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ. The difference then is that κόσμος οὗτος refers to the contents of the created world as well as the world itself which God created and loved. This would be the physical universe as well as all that is in it. The πῶς οὗτος is a period of time during which the κόσμος exists. The κόσμος will be destroyed on Judgment Day.

#### B. The κόσμος as Evil.

There is a wide chasm fixed between God and κόσμος. This is evident from such usages as I Cor. 2:12: "But we (the believers) did not receive τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου, but the Spirit which is of God". And in I Cor. 1:20f the wisdom τοῦ κόσμου is foolishness to God, and the κόσμος cannot know the wisdom of God. So also in I Cor. 3:19. There is also a clash between the standards and judgments of men of the κόσμος and God's. In I Cor. 1:27f Paul writes: "But God chose the foolishness τοῦ κόσμου in order that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God did not choose the strong τοῦ κόσμου in order that He might put to shame the strong; and the base things τοῦ κόσμου and the things which are despised God chose, even things which are not, to bring to nothing the things which are".

The reason for the break between God and the κόσμος is sin. In Rom. 5:21f the cause is original sin: "Therefore just as through one man sin entered εἰς τὸν κόσμον and death through sin. And so death spread unto all men, for all sinned. For before the law, sin was ἐν κόσμῳ; but sin was not reckoned when there was no law". Sin which comes through the law brings this guilt upon the κόσμος according to Rom. 3:19: "But

we know that whatever the law says it says to those in the law, that every mouth may be stopped and ἡσὶς ὁ κἀρῆος may become guilty to God".

It is not only the things in the κἀρῆος that are sinful, but the κἀρῆος itself. For this reason God will judge the κἀρῆος. Paul exclaims: (Rom. 3:6) "How then will God judge τὴν κἀρῆαν?" The Christians are not part of the κἀρῆος, for they will judge it. I Cor. 6:2 says: "Do you not know that the saints will judge τὸν κἀρῆον?" But the saints themselves are being judged by the Lord: (I Cor. 11:32) "But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened, so that we will not be condemned ἐν τῇ κἀρῆᾳ". Ultimately the κἀρῆος is condemned and perishes while the saints are purified and preserved.

#### G. The Work of Christ in Relation to the κἀρῆος.

The sinful condition of the κἀρῆος became all the more manifest when Christ was crucified. In I Cor. 2:8 Paul says: "(the mystery) which neither the rulers of the present aeon knew: for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory". But just as the chasm between God and the κἀρῆος became clear at the crucifixion of Christ, so also it was healed over by Him. II Cor. 5:19 states: "God was in Christ, reconciling the κἀρῆον to himself, not imputing to them their trespasses". A similar meaning is in Rom. 11:15: "But if the casting away of them is the reconciling κἀρῆων, what is the receiving again but life from the dead". The apostles are sent out to announce this great fact: (I Cor. 4:9) "For I think that God has showed forth us, the apostles, last, as appointed to death, that we might become spectacles τῷ κἀρῆῳ and to angels and to men."

Christ's work is the mystery which "brings to naught the wisdom τῶν

κόσμου and of the rulers of the κόσμου, I Cor. 2:6.8. So also Paul can say, Eph. 2:1f, that the Ephesian Christians were once dead in trespasses and sins, in which they walked according to the aeon of this world, but with the coming of Christ they are made alive, and are privileged to partake in the coming aeon.

So Sasse<sup>2</sup> points out that the κόσμος is the "Schauplatz des Heilsgeschichte". But it is not only the scene, it is also the object of the reconciliation. Rom. 8:22 says that πάντα ἡ κτίσις has anxiously awaited this event. Christ, Who Himself created all things, has reconciled them through His sacrifice: (Col. 1:16.20) "For in Him were all things created in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, thrones and lordships and rules and authorities . . . and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross".

D. The new Relationship of the Believer to the κόσμος

As soon as the κόσμος is redeemed, the believer stands in a new relation to it. Just as all persons still live under the αἰὼν αὐτοῦ, so also the believer is still in the κόσμος. But he is not an integral part of it. Instead the believer now becomes a member of the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ. So also the αἰὼν αὐτοῦ still exists but he is in the αἰὼν ἐν Χριστῷ, in the οὐρανῶν καινῶν καὶ ἐν κινήσει. The κόσμος which remains is the world of heathen philosophy (I Cor. 2), of sin (Rom. 3:19, and 5:12), and death (I Cor. 2:8). This is evident from Paul's

<sup>2</sup>Sasse, op. cit., p. 893

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

teaching. In I Tim. 1:15 he says: "The saying is sure and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the κόσμος to save sinners". The believers are actually transplanted from the sinful κόσμος and the αἰὼν ὀσφύτος where darkness has authority: (Col. 1:13) "Who has delivered us from the authorities of darkness and translated us εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν of His dear Son". The saints, to whom Paul addresses I Cor. 5:10 are still in the κόσμος, in fact they cannot get out of it: "not altogether with the fornicators of this κόσμος, or with the greedy and extortioners or idolators, for then you must go ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου". The believers are different from the κόσμος in that they are "blameless and harmless, children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights ἐν κόσμῳ", Phil. 2:15. And Paul states from Mars Hill that God who made the κόσμος and all things that are in the κόσμος should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him. The believers still use the κόσμος, but they use "τὸν κόσμον as not abusing it", (I Cor. 7:31), i. e. they should live as though they had nothing of it. The Christians dare not give in to the evil influences of the world: (Col. 2:20f) "If you died with Christ from the elements τοῦ κόσμου, why as though living ἐν κόσμῳ are you subject to the ordinances?" Paul's entire life is wrapped about His Savior, not the κόσμος. He says in Gal. 6:14: "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom κόσμος is crucified to me and I to κόσμος". Similarly St. James (4:4) says: "Adulterers, do you not know that the love τοῦ κόσμου is ἐχθρὰ of God? for if anyone wants to be a friend of the κόσμος, he is the enemy of God".

As previously stated, John uses the term κόσμος very much like Paul, perhaps even more definitely and specifically. He says in I John 2:17, like Paul in I Cor. 7:31: "ὁ κόσμος passes away and the lusts thereof, but he who does the will of God abides εἰς τὰ αἰῶνα".

On the basis of the above discussion one can conclude that the κόσμος is usually, if not always, a spatial designation, referring to the created world with all things that are in it. Through sin this κόσμος became entirely evil. Nevertheless God loved the κόσμος and redeemed it so that now it is man's choice to stay in the κόσμος as an integral part of it, or to abandon its evil ways, wisdom, lusts, love, etc. and to use it only as a place where he can see and learn of Him who likewise lived in it and redeemed it.

The time of the αἰὼν αὐτός is parallel to the duration of the κόσμος. They both exist from the creation until the final judgment day. And as indicated before, after a man has freed himself from all ordinances and connections with the κόσμος, he immediately is translated into the αἰὼν αὐτός, the kingdom of Christ. This he does by believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ pro nobis.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion to this entire study there are several facts concerning Paul and his epistles which the author feels compelled to summarize. The first is that the concept of αἰών, and especially αἰών ὅτος and αἰών μέλλων as used by Paul, actually reveals Jesus Christ. We have seen that Jesus Christ stands in the middle of the αἰών ὅτος. And He also stands at the beginning of the αἰών μέλλων. He is Himself the King of the new aeon. And men become members of the new aeon by accepting His invitation to enter it by faith. To arrive at this conclusion fulfills one of the original purposes of this study; namely, to examine one particular concept of the Apostle to verify his own statement of I Cor. 2: "For I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified".

Secondly, this study has shown that the term αἰών has a very real meaning for the Apostle. The idea of the two aeons are not merely a carry-over from the Apostle's rabbinic training, nor is it a reflection of his supposed knowledge of Greek speculative philosophy, but it actually exists in the Christian frame of reference.

As Nygren<sup>1</sup> has stated, Paul thinks in terms of aeons. The old aeon is under the dominion of death, and the new aeon is under the dominion of Christ. By means of these terms Paul is seeking to declare the "universal, cosmic significance of Christ"<sup>2</sup>. An understanding of the two aeons can only

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<sup>1</sup> Nygren, op. cit., passim.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 21

be gained when one considers the difference between the two. They are a contrast between death and life. The old aeon is not merely a realm dominated by death as a termination of this life, but it is also a judgment that rests upon life. In the old aeon everything that we call life lies under the dominion of death. From Adam on every living thing is marked by death.

In contradistinction Paul speaks of the new aeon as under the dominion of life. This life is not something to be sought only in the future but, in virtue of the resurrection of Christ, it is here now, revealed in the Gospel of Christ. Paul refers to it as the coming aeon because, as Nygren states<sup>3</sup>:

As long as men had to look forward toward Him who was to come, the new aeon could only be called the coming age. But now, after He has come, it is no longer merely something that is to be. Since the resurrection of Christ, the new aeon has become actual fact in our world.

Nygren continues that the Gospel is the proclamation of the work wrought by God when He sent Jesus Christ into the world. It is the declaration that God brought something entirely new into this age, that through Christ he brought the new age among us, an age begun in our midst, but to be fulfilled in glory.

It has already been noted that the κόσμος is the evil world on which God performed this great act; it is the "schauplatz" where the divine act of God's love took place. The old aeon is the period of time of the κόσμος. But it is only during the old aeon, in the κόσμος, that men have an opportunity to accept the Gospel of Christ and be transferred to the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

new aeon, and thus become new creatures. This must take place during the divine mement of God's gracious invitation, the ἰαπίσ. If man accepts this gospel invitation, he no longer is as he once, ἴσ, was, but he is entirely different, so that he can contrast his old life with the new by the Apostle's expression: ἴσ / ἰαπίσ.

Absolutely everything except the life which Christ gives must be classified under the old aeon. This includes both the shameful heathen practices and thoughts as well as the arrogant Jewish righteousness by the law. For God permits only one acceptable quality of man to live, namely, the righteousness which God Himself gives to man owing to the work of His Son. And it is faith which appropriates this to man. This is how even the saints of the Old Testament period were able, like Abraham, to rejoice to see the new day, the day of Christ, and thus become members of the new and coming aeon.

Finally, the question as to how much theological significance should be placed into this teaching of Paul cannot yet be answered. It could well form the starting point of Christian theology since every tenet, to the author's knowledge, of Christian theology can be placed under this concept. A trace of this concept is not only found in every epistle of the Apostle, but frequently in many chapters of each epistle. However, while the author feels that the two-aeon teaching of Paul could possibly be given too much significance, he does not think that such a danger is present yet. Hence he would encourage every theologian and Bible student to a more extensive and thorough study of both the idea as well as the exact terms which convey the two-aeon teaching. And may the Spirit Himself continue to bless such labor and study.

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