



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XVIII  
Issue 446

## Eons and Worlds

### A Preliminary Overview

by — Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988)

May I plead with those who seek to teach the truth of the eons to avoid reasoning of all kinds? We do not need its aid. Error must depend on torturous processes of illogical minds in order to defend itself. Truth is direct. Reason is indirect. Error appeals to unreasonable deduction founded on prejudice, not facts. Reason robs us of God's revelation. If *aion* sometimes means a limited, and sometimes an unlimited time, then we need a pope, or a church, or human tradition to tell us what it means in each case, and divine inspiration vanishes and is replaced by corrupt human mentality. If our critics had a sound mind, they would see that they also are modernists, denying God's revelation and substituting man's imagination.

A.E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. XXVII, page 175

#### TIME HAS MANY ASPECTS

The planet Earth makes a diurnal revolution each twenty-four hours, and passes once around the sun every 365- $\frac{1}{4}$  days. Thus on the planet Earth a man would be sixty years of age after sixty revolutions of the earth about the sun.

Yet on the planet Jupiter our man of sixty would be approximately five years of age since Jupiter takes almost twelve years to make one revolution.

On the planet Uranus our man of sixty would have to wait twenty-four years more before he would be even one year old, since Uranus takes eighty-four of our years to make one revolution.

If sixty earth years are the equivalent of five Jupiter years, and are less than one Uranus year, we will agree with Peter that

*One day is with the Lord as a thousand years,  
and a thousand years as one day* (II Peter 3:8).



#### CHRONOS AND KAIROS

In the *Concordant Keyword Concordance* "*chronos*," or *time*, is defined as *duration* (in its extent, Romans 16:25; or a particular point in its course, Matthew 2:7; or in the sense of delay, Revelation 10:6; page 305). *Kairos*, or *season*, is defined as "a distinct portion of time having special characteristics, an *appointed time*, an *era*, an *occasion*, a *period*" (page 261).

Time is asymmetrical. It does not run backward, only forward, for He is saying,

*In a season [kairos] acceptable I reply to You,  
And in a day of salvation I help you.*

Paul drives home the salient point of the event-meaning *occasion* (*kairos*) in which opportunities are afforded within the moment of clock-time *chronos*.

*Lo! Now is a most acceptable era [kairos! Lo!  
Now is a day of salvation!]* (II Corinthians 6:2).

(see *Eons*, page 3971) ↗

## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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*Eons (continued from front page)*

The next step will take us from the temporary (*proskairon*) or limited period of time to *eonian* time, the longest segment of time known in the Scriptures. Hence an understanding of the *eons* will enable us to see the exquisite relation between what is “being observed,” which is *temporary*, and what is “not being observed,” which is *eonian* (II Corinthians 4:18).

Further, by distinguishing between the *eonian* and the *ultimate*, we will observe how they *merge* to the eye of faith as each moment of *eonian* time is seen to contribute to His ultimate.

The old-fashioned hand-held parlor stereopticon may be used as an illustration. There were two pictures side by side on one card. By sliding the card holder along the arm to which the card was attached, the observer reached a point where the double pictures dissolved into a single view with a three-dimensional depth. A similar effect may be arrived at by seeing the *eonian* and the ultimate merge, thus allowing the viewer a stereoptical depth perception of God's *eonian* purpose.

This outcome of the God-directed historical process may be unwittingly reflected in the dome of the United States Capitol of Washington, D.C., where we find this inscription.

“One God, one Law, one element, and one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves.”

### DISCORDANT RENDERINGS

In consequence of the royal commands, the translators of the A.V. tended to be too complaisant and compliant to the king, hence they rendered such words as *Hades* and *Gehenna* wrongly as *hell*, *aion* and *aionios* improperly as *world*, *eternal*, *everlasting*.

This work was done at a time when the exercise of genuine scholarship was difficult, if not impossible, and thus their theological bias impelled the translators to incorporate into their version words which have no warrant in the Greek, hence no counterpart in the thought and truth of the Original.

The English Revisers were under a similar handicap and, as has been said by others, the true translation is

not to be found in the text but in the margin. Much more could be said in this vein, and said in sorrow and not in spite, since good men succumbed to pressure, thus producing a work below their abilities.

The R.V. was a vast improvement over the AV, yet not as good as the text and the translators could have made it. It has been well said that “the Greek can draw a clear line where other languages can only make a blot.”

We are particularly perturbed at the treatment by the A.V. and R.V. of the key words *aion* and *aionion*, or *eon* and *eonian*. The margin of the A.V. and R.V. admit that *eon* denotes *age*. If, however, it also means “*world*,” why should the plural be rendered “*forever*,” and the adjective “*everlasting*”?

It is surely manifest that any word should carry substantially the same central significance in all of its modifications. Why render the noun “*world*” in the text and *age* in the margin? Why render “*forever and ever*” in the text and “*age of ages*” in the margin? Why render the adjective “*eternal*” and “*everlasting*”? Is this a faithful translation, or is it theological proclivity? *A word that can mean anything means nothing.*

One particular error that is indefensible is the phrase “*forever and ever*.” If “*forever*” means endlessly, the addition of “*and ever*” is tautological and meaningless. If, however, “*forever*” does not carry that connotation, then the additional “*and ever*” cannot impart such a meaning. This rendering is a theological contrivance which is defensible neither on linguistic nor philological grounds. Since the phrase contains two plural nouns, it should be translated “*ages of ages*,” or “*eons of eons*.”

We shall consult the Scriptures of the New Testament for the occurrences of *eon*, singular and plural, and by a careful canvass of the context be enabled to categorize as follows: what was said to be before the eons, what is said as to the making of the eons, what should be the bare minimum number of them to square with what is said of them, what their relationship is to the word *world*, what is said as to their consummation and conclusion, and how endlessness is set forth in His Word. Our assignment is one which only God Himself can carry out: how to pull down reasonings without pulling down the reasoner (II Corinthians 10:4-5). ▶

## OBJECTORS SHOULD DEFINE THEIR DISCORDANT TERMINOLOGY

If there are those who would inveigh against our attempt to expose what objectors claim are “assured results,” “sacrosanct deductions,” or at best “innocent archaisms,” we respectfully dissent. We would rather encourage those who love God more than man to give themselves to this task of grasping God’s tremendous truth enshrined within the words under study, exactly as given by *Him* and as meant by *His usage* of them.

When we have finished our study, we shall find ourselves able to believe and to explain these words. Hence we feel it is incumbent on the objectors to explain: *What do the following inspired expressions mean?*

*The end of the eon* (Matthew 24:3).

*The ends of the eons* (I Corinthians 10:11).

*The end of the eons* (Hebrews 9:26).

*The eon of the eons* (Ephesians 3:21).

*The eons of the eons* (Revelation 11:15).

The renderings “forever” and “forever and ever” do not *illuminate* the meaning of these words. Instead, they obfuscate and *becloud* the inspired meaning of the terms. Scholars of Hebrew and Greek should know that there is no word in these languages to correspond to our word “eternal.” The terms “for ever,” “eternal,” etc., are commonly used among us to mean “absolutely unending.” But this cannot be the case in the following A.V. renderings:

— Jonah was in the sea for ever (three days) 2:6;

— a slave serves for ever (his lifetime) Exodus 21:6;  
— the Temple stands for ever (400 years) I Kings 9:3.

Examples of Scripture usage, but theological rendering, are too many to list; but these may suffice and serve to set the stage for the needed extensive study of this crucial key word. The adjective *eonian* is derived from the noun *eon*. As the noun *eon* denotes an age of limited duration, so the adjective *eonian* must mean a limited period corresponding to it.

Gehazi’s leprosy was to last “for ever,” yet it ended at his death (II Kings 5:27).

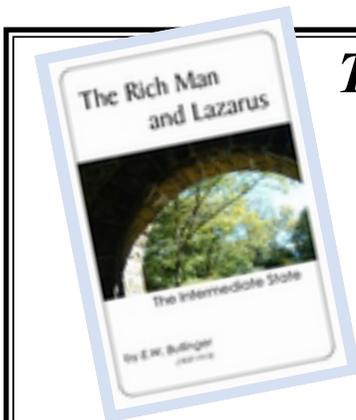
The land of Canaan was to be an “everlasting” possession to the Jews, yet they were dispossessed from occupancy for centuries (Genesis 17:8; 48:4).

The priesthood of Aaron was “eternal” (Numbers 25:13), yet it has been abrogated.

The hills are “everlasting” (Genesis 49:26), yet they are to be brought low.

## THE EONS IN GOD’S WORD

This truth concerning the eons, as articulated in God’s Word, is of such momentous import that any attempt to reproduce the terminology of the Greek becomes awesome in its responsibilities. No furtive finger should intrude, no vagrant thought invade; no theological bias should warp, no mind not sharply honed should be allowed to hinder any student who desires only to know what God says in His Word – exactly, accurately, literally.



64 pp, BK

## *The Rich Man and Lazarus: The Intermediate State*

by — E.W. Bullinger

It is the author’s contention that, when dealing with the subject of what happens at death, it is important that Christians confine themselves to what the Bible has to say and not turn to tradition. Some current views have more in common with the traditions taught by the Pharisees than with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*See order form.*

The truth concerning the part *the purpose of the eons* plays when it is seen in its inspired context, opens to our minds useful paths of seldom traversed truth. Yet the place of *the eons in God's purpose* has hitherto been concealed from us by faulty translations. The student who possesses a concordance and knows how to use it can get at the facts, but the reader of our revered *King James* or *Authorized Version* is left to the mercy of the translators. Dwight L. Moody discovered the value of the concordance as a tool, and it became one of his three most prized possessions: his Bible, his concordance and his topical textbook. Let us see what answers we get from the *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, (by Robert Young; 22<sup>nd</sup> American Edition, Revised).

Our problem is as follows: We wish to untangle the apparent contradiction between “*end of the world*” (Matthew 24:3) and “*world without end*” (Ephesians 3:21). Since there can be no actual contradiction in God's inspired word, we know that this is only an apparent discrepancy. Since we learn by doing, we will do well to follow the steps set before us in this lesson.

### HOW TO DO IT THE HARD WAY

Using Young's concordance as a dictionary, we turn to “W” beginning on page 1073. Going down the third column looking for our reference under the keyword *World*, we find Matthew 24:3 under this heading:

#### 6. Age, indefinite time, dispensation, aion.

From this information we have learned that “*world*” should be age in this passage.

Yet where is our other reference? We keep on looking until we come to the second column on page 1074 where we find Ephesians 3:21 under “*World*, (standeth, beginning of the, without end).” Farther down we find:

#### 5. Of the age of the ages, tou aionos ton aionon.

With this information our verse reads: throughout all ages, of the age of the ages [instead of “*world without end*”].

Now we will have to check up on the term “*throughout all ages*.” By consulting the concordance on page 21, column two, under the keyword *Ages*, we find that the first “*ages*” in Ephesians 3:21 is *geneai*, *generations*. With this added information our verse reads:

... throughout all generations of the age of the ages.

Confusing? No, we have come a long way toward resolving our problem, though we have much more to look up and much more to learn about this key concept to God's divine calendar. Remember, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

The student who uses this concordance (or *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, or *Wigram's Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*) will have the Greek letters transliterated for him; that is, the Greek characters will be put into familiar English equivalents. We now know that our Greek word in Matthew 24:3 and Ephesians 3:21 is *aion*.



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Let us take the next step. The last page of the words under “Z” is 1090. Then we find page 1 again, which begins an “Index-Lexicon to the Old Testament,” and on page 57 an “Index-Lexicon to the New Testament.” For the time being this is what we want. Let us see what it can tell us that will help us.

Here we find all of the Greek words of the New Testament arranged alphabetically and spelled out according to the transliterated manner mentioned before. On page 57, in the fifth column, we find *aion* and listed under it (in alphabetical order) all of the ways in which this one Greek word is translated in the A.V. The number following each rendering tells us how many times it occurs. By turning up each of these words and looking until we find our word *aion*, we shall have all of its occurrences. Under *aion* on page 57 we also find *aionios*, the adjective. Let us gather together what we know as of now.

<i>aion</i> [noun]		<i>aionios</i> [adjective]	
age	2	eternal	42
beginning of the world	2	everlasting	25
course	1	for ever	1
eternal	2		
world	32		
world began	1		

This information is invaluable to us for understanding other related and important subjects, but it will do us little good if it remains only in the concordance.<sup>1</sup> It must be transferred to the margins of our Bible, unless – that is – we have the *Concordant Version*. By turning up each passage and marking each as *aion* or *aionion*, singular and plural, or as *aionios*, adjective, and in the combinations found in the Greek, the student will learn what these words mean by the way they are used.

1. J.B. Smith, *Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament*, A Tabular and Statistical Greek-English Concordance based on the *King James Version* with an English-to-Greek Index (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1955), pages 9 and 10, serial numbers 165a, 165b, 166, supply the following statistics:

For the noun *aion*, a total of 128 occurrences, rendered: ever (71), world (38), never (6), evermore (4), age (2), eternal (2), miscellaneous (5).

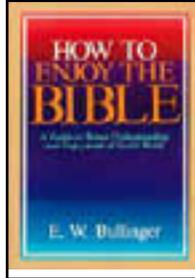
For the adjective *aionios*, a total of 71 occurrences, rendered: eternal (42), everlasting (25), the world began (2), since the world began (1), for ever (1).

## HOW TO DO IT THE SENSIBLE WAY

“Age” may do for the singular noun, and “ages” for the plural noun, but we face a problem with the adjective. We can resort to the circumlocution of “age-lasting” or “age-during,” as some versions do, but we shall have to add words not found in the text. The simplest solution is to convert the Greek *aion*, *aionion*, and *aionios* into the English *eon*, *eons*, and *eonian*. This eliminates the human element which tends to intrude when translating. This is simply transliteration, which is what the compilers of concordances and some translators have done with other words, such as baptize, ecclesia, amen, hallelujah.

A feature of the *Concordant Version*, which some fail to appreciate and others applaud, is the transliteration of *aion* to *eon*, and *aionios* to *eonian*. Thus the reader sees these controversial and much-disputed words as nearly as possible as they are in the Greek, hence he has the same facilities as the scholar of Greek for understanding the exact meaning of these terms.

Our *Concordant Keyword Concordance*, which is the companion to the *Concordant Version*, has all of the information on *eon*, *eons* and *eonian* categorized on just two pages (90 and 91). *Authorized Version* renderings (such as *eternal*, *everlasting*, *forever*, *world* etc.) are also listed, alphabetically and statistically. How much simpler this is than the way we have been doing it, digging it out of other concordances, which proved to be a cumbersome, time-consuming, hard way. Using our *Concordant Version* and *Concordant Keyword Concordance* is a time-saving method; we will arrive at the same results, without losing our way in the maze of deviant meanderings and discordant terminology in concordances which reflect *Authorized Version* or *Revised Version* vocabularies. ■



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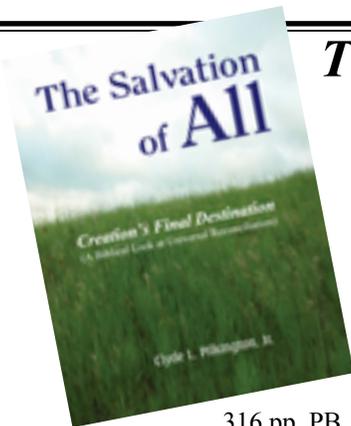


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