

# BIBLICAL SUBJECT & STRUCTURE

Part II

## Genesis... John...

EACH TESTAMENT BEGINS AND CONTINUES THE SAME WAY

By Arlen L. Chirwood

Since the whole of Scripture in both Testaments deals with events during “time” (six and seven thousand years of time [6,000 years of restorative work, followed by a 1,000-year day of rest]) *WHY* does practically the whole of Christendom read and see Scripture dealing with events during “time” (present) in relation to “eternity” (future)?

And, in a respect, that is a rather easy question to answer, though, at the same time, it is a very difficult question to deal with.

The simple answer is threefold:

1) Problems with the English translation, mainly with three words — *olam* (O.T.) *aion*, *aionios* (N.T.).

2) How individuals understand Gen. 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-2:11 and the relationship these sections have to all subsequent Scripture.

3) The resulting central message *seen throughout ALL Scripture*.

*Olam* is the main Hebrew word translated “eternal” throughout the Old Testament, and *aion* or *aionios* (the adjective form of *aion*) are the two Greek words translated “eternal” throughout the New Testament.

Question: *HOW* can the superstructure deal with “eternity” when the foundation deals *ONLY* with “time,” limited to seven thousand years?

And the answer is quite simple:

*It CAN'T!*

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The foundation, so to speak, *is the SET standard*. And “time” in the superstructure *MUST remain in COMPLETE keeping with “time” in the foundation, the SET standard*.

The matter is similar to the relationship between the timepiece in Greenwich and the celestial chronometer.

The timepiece in Greenwich *is ALWAYS set by the unchangeable, celestial chronometer, NEVER the other way around*.

And, in like manner, that which follows Gen. 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-2:11 *MUST ALWAYS remain in complete accord with that SET in these foundational passages, the SET, unchangeable standard*.

### No Word for “eternal”

Something little understood is the fact that *NEITHER* the Hebrew text of the Old Testament *NOR* the Greek text of the New Testament has a word for “eternal.”

*Olam* in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is the main word translated “eternal.” This word has to do, *NOT* with “eternity,” *BUT* with “a long period of time,” which would be “time” related to the subject at hand.

And though the word is used of God numerous times, it would still relate, first and foremost, to time in the foundational structure. True, God transcends “time,” *BUT*, it would also be true that Scripture deals with events during “time,” *NOT* during “eternity.”

*Aion* and *aionios* in the Greek text of the New Testament are associated with “time” the same way that *olam* is associated with “time” in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

(For a comprehensive understanding of the way *aion* and *aionios* are used in the Greek text of the New Testament, refer to the article, “Aion, Aionios,” on the author’s web site.

The contents of this article were taken from Marvin R. Vincent’s *Word Studies in the New Tes-*

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*tament* [a widely recognized four-volume Greek word study, edited over one hundred years ago, still a standard work today].)

The Greek philosophers, preceding the writing of the New Testament, used *aion* to reference “time,” *NOT* “eternity,” with *aionios* used in their later writings after the same fashion.

And this is the type usage and understanding of these two words that continued through the time that the New Testament was written.

And, as well, this would be in complete keeping with that seen in the foundational material beginning each Testament. Understanding the use of *olam*, *aion*, or *aionios* as “eternal” — at any point from Moses to John — would *NOT ONLY* be out of line with this foundational material *BUT ALSO* with an understanding of *HOW* these words were understood and used at the time Scripture was written.

Thus, the understanding and use of *olam* throughout the approximately one-thousand-year period during which the Old Testament was written (abt. 1,400 to 400 B.C.) and of *aion* and *aionios* during the first century when the New Testament was written (during and shortly beyond the Acts period) would be in complete keeping with the thought of “time,” *NOT* “eternity,” as set forth in the foundational data beginning both Testaments.

In short, *it would be IMPOSSIBLE* to understand any one of these three words as “eternal” throughout this time and, at the same time, *remain in COMPLETE KEEPING with the foundational material*.

And *exactly* when and how *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* subsequently came to be understood as “eternal,” is, in reality, a moot point. The foundation (seen beginning both Genesis and John) simply will *NOT* permit the words to reference “eternity”: *NOR* will the use and understanding of these words throughout the period extending from Moses to John permit such.

(This departure, misusing these words, resulting in that which exists today, is often traced to Jerome's particular choice and use of Latin words to translate *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* in his *Latin Vulgate* [400 A.D.], a translation which became somewhat of a standard reference work.

However, again, that is neither here nor there. The foundation has been ignored, an understanding of the words has, accordingly, changed over the centuries, and Christians are left with the results today [existing translations, reflecting the way that the words have come to be understood, *NOT* *were understood*, with far-reaching, negative ramifications].)

### Expressing "eternal" in Scripture

*Aion*, as it is used in the Greek New Testament, often references "an age" (*ref.* the author's article, "Ages and Dispensations").

We derive our English word "aeon," or "eon." from *aion*. And, when the text does project matters out beyond the seven days, the seven thousand years, there is a double use of *aion*, or *aion* is used in a plural form (refer to the evident reason for this earlier in the article).

On the double use of *aion*, note verses such as Rev. 1:6; 4:9; 5:14, where the words, "forever and ever," appear in the English text (KJV). These words are a translation of a double use of *aion*, with both words plural and articular. The more literal translation would be "the ages of the ages," referencing the endless ages of eternity.

On the plural form of *aion*, note verses such as Luke 1:33 and Heb. 13:8. The plural form should literally be translated "ages," referencing endless time, the endless ages of eternity.

And a similar double use of *olam* appears in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament (*e.g.*, Ps. 103:17; Dan. 7:18).

### A Question

*HOW* does one translate or distinguish be-

tween the double use, or particularly the plural, of *aion* *IF* the singular form is to be translated and understood as "eternal."

Or, a related question could be asked as well. *WHY* should there even be a double use or plural of this word *IF* the singular is all-encompassing in relation to "time"?

*BUT*, all of that is neither here nor there anyway, for the word doesn't mean "eternal," evident from the foundation upon which Scripture rests (having to do with "time," *NOT* with "eternity") and its use at the time Scripture was written.

### Age-Lasting and/or Eternal Salvation

As seen in this article, *SALVATION* in Scripture *has to do*, *FIRST* and *FOREMOST*, *with the seventh day, the earth's coming Sabbath, the Messianic Era, set forth in the septenary foundation beginning Scripture. It would have to, for that seen in the subsequently revealed superstructure MUST remain in complete keeping with that first seen in the previously revealed foundation.*

Matters concerning regal power and authority over this earth *MUST* be dealt with *FIRST*. *The rights to and exercise of this regal power* are what Scripture is about, quite evident in both the foundation and the superstructure.

Scripture is simply *NOT* about the ages beyond the Messianic Era (*NOT* about eternity), though enough has been revealed to show that man will continue in a regal capacity during these ages (note particularly Rev. 21, 22).

*And THIS continued regal activity will have to do with a rule from the new earth, evidently throughout the universe.*

### Age(s) Past, Ages Future Man's Day. the Lord's Day

There would be one or more ages in the past, preceding the restoration of the earth and man's creation. We're not told.

Man's Day, lasting six days, 6,000 years, comprises the subsequent age.

The Lord's Day, lasting one day, 1,000 years, will comprise the age following Man's Day.

And, following the end of the Lord's Day, the end of the seven days, the end of the 7,000 years, a new age will begin, with an evident endless array of ages following.

As shown in this article, Scripture, beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation, is about God's work with man, during *one age* (Man's 6,000-year Day), with a view to *a subsequent age* (the Lord's 1,000-year Day), *NOT* about God's work with man relative to the eternal ages beyond; and *the WHOLE of the matter* is in relation to *a kingdom*.

*EVERYTHING* moves toward the Lord's Day and a kingdom realized in that day, *NOT* toward the eternal ages beyond.

*The WHOLE of Scripture* has to do with what some have termed "the angelic conflict," carrying the matter through to completion. And that has to do with Satan and his angels ultimately being put down, with Christ and His co-heirs *THEN* taking the kingdom and reigning for 1,000 years, *UNTIL that seen in I Cor. 15:24, 25 has been brought to pass:*

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

*ONLY THEN, can the ages beyond come into view, referenced briefly at the end of Scripture in Rev. 21, 22.*

The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.  
225 S. Cottonwood Ranch Road  
Cottonwood, AZ 86326  
www.lampbroadcast.org