

Chapter 1

Eons [Ages] & Eonian [Age-Lasting]

Before jumping into *the all* of God, there is one foundational truth that needs to be understood that comes through the Greek words *aiōn* and *aiōnion*, which mean "age" and "age-lasting" or "age-during," respectively.

Depending on the translation, these meanings are often lost through *interpretative bias*, which means that in translating Scripture from the original languages into another language the translators use words based on tradition and interpretation of what they believe to be the meaning behind the words. The term is not meant to question the integrity or honesty of any translators. It seems that a certain amount of interpretation is inevitable.

The word *aiōn* is not nearly the challenge as is the word *aiōnion*. *Aiōn* is often, but not always, translated as *age*; however, *aiōnion* is most often translated as *forever*, *everlasting*, or *eternal*. Obviously, these are two different meanings.

In the Greek language, the transliterated noun ***aiōn*** is equivalent to the Anglicized word ***eon*** or its equivalent ***age***, meaning ***an indefinite period of time***. The adjective form of *aiōn* is ***aiōnion***; its Anglicized equivalent is ***eonian*** or its equivalent ***age-lasting*** or ***age-during***, meaning it **qualifies something as existing in time or that lasts for a period of time**.

Transliterated means to write or spell words, etc. in the characters of another alphabet that represent the same sound or sounds. Thus, *aiōn* is the transliterated word for the Greek word αἰῶν, pronounced *ahee-ohn*.

Anglicized means the item in question has been changed to an English idiom, pronunciation, custom, manner, word, etc. Thus, *eon* is the Anglicized word for *aiōn*. Notice how the two words are similar in spelling and pronunciation.

It is vital to understand that *eonian* is derived from its root word *eon*. As such, its meaning is related to its root word. If *aiōn*, the noun, speaks of an age or eon, then *aiōnion*, the adjective, should also speak of an age or eon as a qualifier of whatever subject [noun] is attached to it. This is vital because many who see *aiōn* as an *age* see *aiōnion* as *everlasting*, *forever*, or *eternal*, meaning endless or outside of time.

Going forward, please keep in mind that the words *eon* and *age* are interchangeable, as well as the words *eonian* and *age-during* or *age-lasting*. For the most part, I prefer the words *eon* and *eonian*, which are found in the *Concordant Literal New Testament* (CV); however, both *eon* and *age* will be used throughout the chapters that follow.

As an example, many mainline translations use the phrase *eternal purpose* in Paul's circular letter titled *Ephesians*.

This was in accordance with the *eternal* [aiōn] purpose [prosthesis] which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.... (Ephesians 3:11 NASB; KJV, LITV)

Based on this translation, one is led to believe that God has an eternal or endless purpose, but the fact of the matter is the Greek word translated *eternal* is the noun *aiōn* in its plural form, meaning *eons* or *ages*. Thus, the more accurate rendering of this phrase is *the purpose of the ages*, which brings God's purpose into time, not outside of it. Or, we could say that God's purpose is explained in or through the ages.

This conclusion is supported by several translations compiled together.

In accord with [according to] the purpose of the eons [ages] [aiōn], which He makes [made, purposed] in Christ [Anointed, Messiah] Jesus, our Lord.... (Ephesians 3:11 CV, DNT, HCSB, REB, WED, YLT)

A paraphrased translation captures the same thought by relating the eons or ages to history.

This was God's plan for all of history which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:11 GW)

At a minimum, this should cause one with an inquisitive mind to dig a bit deeper into this subject. Perhaps our understanding of eonian truths has been lost or obscured over the years.

Systematizing the Deception

In the early fifth century, Jerome translated the Greek New Testament into what is known as the ***Latin Vulgate***. There were two Latin words that he could have used as equivalents for the Greek word *aiōnion* – *aeternum* and *speculum*, from which come our English words *eternal* and *secular* (or, worldly), respectively. However, *aeternum* also has a double meaning, either *unending time* or an *age* or *eon*, as in a limited period of time. In a sense, both meanings incorporate the concept of time. Jerome chose *aeternum* and herein lies the challenge, for this left its meaning open to interpretative bias.

Keep in mind that to the Greeks, the word *aiōnion* referred to belonging to an indefinite period of time, meaning that it did not necessarily refer to *endless, everlasting, forever, or eternal*.

Unfortunately, Augustine, a contemporary of Jerome, was virtually ignorant of Greek, as noted in the book *Augustine of Hippo* (page 36) by historian Peter Brown. Consequently, when Augustine read the *Vulgate*, he took the word *aeternum* to mean "eternal" or "endless," rather than an "age" or "a period of indefinite time." Due to his great influence in the Latin church, the word *eternal* came to be the equivalent of the word *aionian* or *eonian*. It appears that

Augustine was later shown the error of his interpretation, but due to his influence, the concept of unending, eternal, or everlasting took root in the mind of many and has continued mostly unabated to our day.

Simply, his error was in not seeing that *aiōn* means an age or an eon; consequently, *aiōnion* also serves as a qualifier of an age or eon; that is, it pertains to an age or eon. This one error has had profound influence on Church doctrine down through the centuries to our present day.

In his book, *Mercy and Judgment* (page 178), Dr. F. W. Farrar states: "Since *aion* means 'age,' *anionos* means, properly, 'belonging to an age,' or 'age-long,' and anyone who asserts that it must mean 'endless' defends a position which even Augustine practically abandoned twelve centuries ago."

It is rather unfortunate that only four English translations, the *Concordant Literal New Testament* [CV], *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* [REB], *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* [WED], and *Young's Literal Translation* [YLT]), uniformly render the words *aiōn* and *aiōnion* as an *age* or *eon*, and as *age-during*, *age-lasting*, or *eonian* [*aionian*].

It appears that *aiōn* and *aiōnion* have fallen victim to the type of deception that Paul warned about and called "**the systematizing of the deception**" (Ephesians 4:14 CV). Down through the centuries, the concept of eternal (eternity) or everlasting or forever has been so systematically cemented into Christian doctrine or thinking that it has obscured what Scripture has to say about the ages, especially in light of God's purpose of the ages.

This does not mean that Scripture is devoid of the concept of *eternal* or *everlasting*. It simply means that the concept of *eternal* has overtaken, even obscured, the concept of *eonian* or *age-during*.

BUT, what if the fundamental tenet of Scripture is actually the concept of *ages* or *eons* and not *eternity*? Wouldn't this change the way we view Scripture and God's purpose and plan, or at least add some dimension to it that would otherwise be missed?

The Challenge

In the Greek text, the noun *aiōn* is used 128 times (singular [*aiōn*] and plural [*aiōnōn*] forms), and the adjective *aiōnion* is used 71 times. New Testaments written in English translate these words using nearly 40 different words, including: age, ages, ago, age-lasting, age-long, duration, earliest ages, last ages, latest ages, remote age, remotest age, always, ancient, any more, beginning, does, end, eternal, eternity, ever, forever, and ever, for evermore, first, very first, Immortal, life, never, nevermore, never while the world lasts, never to the end of my days, of old, permanently, time again, all time, old time, today, universe, world, yonder world.

These statistics, alone, should be a caution flag to the inquisitive mind. How can nearly 40 English words for two similar Greek words not produce confusion or, worse, downright error?

Just consider some of the words that are translated from *aiōn* and *aiōnion*: *eternal*, *everlasting*, *forever*, *world*, and *age*. Do you notice something odd about this list? They have different meanings. An *age* refers to an indefinite period of time but with an end in view. *Eternal* refers to endlessness or that which is outside of time and has no end. *World* refers to an orderly arrangement or system.

How can one word and its derivations have such divergent usage and maintain the intent of the Greek? If the Greek word meant "world," then why do the translators not use the word *world* in all places for the word *aiōn*? The answer is that it would not make sense in all cases. Conversely, the same argument is made with the English word *eternal*.

Again, part of the answer lies in *interpretative bias*.

However, wouldn't it be far better to use the words *eon* (noun) or *eonian* (adjective) every place that the Greek words *aiōn* and *aiōnion* appear in the original language and leave it to the reader to discern the meaning according to the context of the verse? Or better yet, how about committing to what the Greek actually means and using the phrase *age-during* or *age-lasting* for *eonian*?

***Olam* = *Aiōn* [Eon] or *Aiōnion* [Eonian]**

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word *olam*, which means "to hide, keep secret, obscure," is equivalent to the Greek word *aiōnion*. The Hebrews often used the term to indicate a long duration of time, such as an age or eon.

The *Gesenius' Lexicon* defines *olam* as "what is hidden; specially hidden time, long; the beginning or end of which is either uncertain or else not defined."

In other words, *olam* implies that the length of time in question is unknown or even hidden from man. Thus, it could mean an age, or it could mean a period of time with no end, at least as far as man can see. The context must determine which it is.

Actually, the Hebrews had no word for *eternal* or *eternity*. It was not in their language. However, much like with *aiōnion* and *aiōn*, interpretative bias has yielded to the words *everlasting*, *forever*, or *eternity*.

For example, people often quote the portion of Ecclesiastes 3:11 about eternity in one's heart. Consider the whole verse: **He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity [*olam*] in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end** [NASB].

Notice that the subject of the verse is actually time and the beginning to the end. It is clear that translators have struggled over how to translate the word *olam*, since the Hebrew has no equivalent for the word *eternity*. Obviously, some were not bothered by this and chose the

word *eternity* anyway. Other translations use the words *knowledge, understanding, world, or obscurity*, the latter lining up the most with the meaning of *olam*.

A footnote in *The Companion Bible* states: "Heb. *olam* = the ages; or the world (in relation to time). Here, put by Fig. Metonymy (of Subject) for that which is inscrutable by man, viz, obscurity as to the past and the future ages, resulting in man's incapacity for finding out, or comprehending the whole of what God doeth."

This actually makes more sense in light of the context of the verse. Simply, Solomon, who had great wisdom and knowledge from God, also knew that some things relative to what God has done and is doing in time from beginning to end are obscure to man. Can anyone truly say that he understands all that God has done since He began to make the eons through His Son?

It seems to me that the phrase ***He has also set the ages in their heart*** is an appropriate way to translate this, especially in light of the context. Simply, God set the ages in man's heart so that he could not figure out everything that God has done or will do before and beyond the ages, as well as in the ages. This should remind us of something Paul quoted from Isaiah 64:4.

According as it has been written, "Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard," nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9 LITV)

Take special note of Paul's emphasis on the ages leading up to this quote.

(6) But we speak wisdom among the perfect, but not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, those being brought to nothing. (7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, having been hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, (8) which none of the rulers of this age has known. For if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.... (1 Corinthians 2:6-8 LITV)

What Solomon saw as obscure, Paul saw as a mystery. The difference between the two men is that the mystery of the ages was revealed to Paul.

Another example of the meaning of *olam* is discovered in Psalm 45:6 (NASB): **Your throne, O God, is forever [olam] and ever [va ad]**. Surely, God's throne is forever, but notice how the psalmist had to add *va ad* to *olam* to indicate something beyond or in addition to a long period of time. In other words, the psalmist had to add *va ad* to *olam* to bring in the concept of forever or, perhaps, additional eons.

The more literal renderings of this verse read "the eon and further," "the age and beyond," and "age-during and forever." *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* (REB) reads: **Your throne, O God is to times age-abiding [olam] and beyond [va ad]**.

Septuagint

The writers of the New Testament often quoted the Old Testament based on the *Septuagint*, which is the Greek version of the Old Testament Hebrew text. Consequently, the meaning of a Greek word is often dictated by the meaning of the original Hebrew word used to translate it into the *Septuagint*.

One example of the equivalency of the words is seen in the fact that *olam* of Psalm 45:6 is translated into *aiōn* when the psalm is quoted in Hebrews 1:8.

Your throne, O God, is forever [aiōn] and ever [aiōn] (Hebrews 1:8 LITV)

Thy throne, O God, is unto times [aiōn] age-abiding [aiōn]. (Hebrews 1:8 REB)

Interestingly, the *Septuagint* did not attempt to come up with another word to replace *va ad*; it translated it with *aiōn* instead. For this reason, some of the more literal translations obviously stick with the concept of time or ages. Some might argue that this cannot be because God's throne is eternal. True; but this does not exclude the possibility that His throne is eonian or related to the ages as well. After all, He is working out His purpose in and through the ages.

The point is that translating *olam* into the words *forever* or *everlasting* is not always accurate, given the context. Consider these examples.

Jonah was in the bowels of the fish for three days, but he cried out that he was there forever.

I went down to the bases of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever [olam]. But You brought up my life from the pit, O Jehovah my God. (Jonah 2:6 LITV)

To the cuttings of mountains I have come down, the earth, her bars are behind me to the age [olam]. And Thou bringest up from the pit my life, O Jehovah my God. (Jonah 2:6 YLT)

Most translations record that the prophet cried out that the earth with its bars was around him *forever*. How could Jonah be in the belly of the fish for three days and nights and forever (everlasting) at the same time? The answer becomes apparent when we see that the word *forever* is translated from *olam*. The more literal translations use the words *eon* or *age* (CV, REB, YLT) rather than the word *forever*. However, it simply means that Jonah had no idea how long his ordeal lasted. It must have seemed as if it would never end, but it did end; proving that *olam* does not necessarily mean "everlasting."

Or, consider the fact that God made an everlasting covenant with the sons of Israel as they stood at the foot of Mount Sinai in Arabia. This covenant is called the Old Covenant. What does the book of Hebrews have to say about this covenant?

(8) For finding fault, He said to them, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, and I will make an end on the house of Israel and on the house of Judah; a new covenant shall be, (9) not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day of My taking hold of their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not regard them, says the Lord. ... (13) In the saying, New, He has made the first old. And the thing being made old and growing aged is near disappearing. (Hebrews 8:8-9, 13 LITV)

In other words, the old was replaced with the new. How could the first covenant be everlasting or eternal if it was replaced with a second one, which, by the way, is based on better promises?

Or, consider one more example in which Phinehas was given an everlasting priesthood.

And it shall be to him, and to his seed after him, the covenant of *an everlasting* [*olam*] priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and atoned for the sons of Israel. (Numbers 25:13 LITV)

(12) 'Therefore say, Lo, I am giving to him My covenant of peace, (13) and it hath been to him and to his seed after him a covenant of a priesthood *age-during* [*olam*], because that he hath been zealous for his God, and doth make atonement for the sons of Israel.' (Numbers 25:12-13 YLT)

His priesthood was not everlasting, for it was replaced by Zadok 300 years later during the reign of Solomon. Simply, when Phinehas was given his priesthood, it was *olam*, meaning for an unknown period of time. He did not know how long it would last, and God did not tell him.

Apparent Contradictions

Sometimes, apparent contradictions are created. Consider two verses from the *King James Version* in which *aiōn* is translated as *world*.

So shall it be at *the end of the world*. (Matthew 13:49)

Throughout all ages, *world without end*. (Ephesians 3:21)

At face value, there appears to be a contradiction, for the world is said to have an end and also have no end. I say "at face value," for there is a way to explain this: The orderly arrangement of man's systems (*kosmos*) will come to an end as the Kingdom of our Lord takes root among the nations, but the earth will not end; the earth will be transformed by fire in God's Day. This is beyond the subject at hand, but I want to have as much balance as possible in what is presented.

Nevertheless, the word *world* has been translated from the Greek word *aiōn*. Following a concordant approach to Scripture, these verses more appropriately read as follows.

Thus shall it be in the conclusion of the eon.

For all the generations of the eon of the eons.

These renderings have no contradiction, even if one has no understanding of the word *eon*. The *eon* in the first verse has a conclusion, but there is no direct reference to an end of the *eon* of the *eons* in the second verse.

Let us consider a few more points.

Meaning of Eon

The first point is to elaborate further on the meaning of *eon*. *Webster's Dictionary* defines it as "an extremely long, indefinite period of time, thousands and thousands of years." This same dictionary defines *eonian* as "lasting forever; eternal." How can the noun form be a long period of time and the adjective form be eternal, when the adjective derives its meaning from the noun? The adjective cannot properly go beyond the meaning of the noun.

The *New Englishman's Greek-English Concordance & Lexicon* (Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1982) defines *eon* as "an age. (a) an indefinitely long period, *eternity* (past or future), John 6:51; 9:32; (b) a certain segment of time, an era, age (present or future), Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; (c) material universe as the manifestation of the ages, i.e., the aggregate of things contained in time."

Take note that section (a) defines it as an indefinitely long period but then includes eternity as past or future. Have you ever wondered how eternity could be past? If it is past, then it must have had a start or end point in the present. The above definition references *eternity* to John 9:32; consider a more literal translation of this verse.

From the beginning of the age [eon] it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of one having been born blind. (John 9:32 LITV [CV])

Other translations use terms like "the beginning of time" or "the beginning of the world." However, concordantly speaking, *age* is more accurate. Either way, time of a long duration is in view.

Adlai Loudy, in his book *God's Eonian Purpose* (Concordant Publishing), defines the word *eon* as "a period of time between two great physical and moral cataclysmic judgments of the earth and its inhabitants. Each of these long periods of time has a beginning and is punctuated by an end."

In Appendix 129 of *The Companion Bible*, Dr. E.W. Bullinger states that *aiōn* "may be limited or extended as the context of each occurrence may demand. The root meaning of *aiōn* is expressed by the Hebrew *olam* which denotes indefinite, unknown or concealed duration, just as we

speak of "the patriarchal age," or "the golden age." Hence, it has come to denote any given period of time, characterized by a special form of Divine administration or dispensation."

Dr. Bullinger goes on to state: "In the plural we have the Heb. *olamin* and Gr. *aiones* used of ages, or of a succession of age-times, and of an abiding from age to age. From this comes the adjective *aiionios* ... used as an unrestricted duration, as distinct from a particular or limited age-time. These age-times must be distinct or they could not be added to, or multiplied, as in the expression *aions* of *aions*."

Aions of *aions* is the same expression used in the *Concordant Literal New Testament* (CV) as *eons* of the *eons*.

We might debate when eons begin and end, but this does not negate the fact that Scripture clearly refers to eons or ages of time. After all, is not the next eon one that lasts 1,000 years?

In Jesus' day, the Hebrew hope was centered on the coming of the Messiah to rule the earth with His people for a Sabbath millennium (seventh day). It is called the Age [Eon]. Both Jesus and Paul called it the *eon* to come. Peter called it the *eonian Kingdom* (2 Peter 1:11). In Mark 10:30, Jesus referred to *the eon to come, eonian life* (i.e., life in the Age).

All the Eons

The second point is Scripture establishes that there are eons, meaning that there is more than one eon. In concluding his epistle, Jude referenced *all the eons*. Notice how Jude also refers to *the entire eon*, which refers to our present eon.

(24) Now to Him Who is able to guard you from tripping, and to stand you flawless in sight of His glory, in exultation, (25) to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority before *the entire eon*, now, as well as for *all the eons*. Amen! (Jude 24-25 CV)

Speaking of Jesus, Paul proclaims that He is **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age [aiōn] but also in the one to come** (Ephesians 1:21 NASB).

Some translations inject their interpretative bias by using the word *world*, but, according to the Greek, it should be *age* or *eon*. In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul refers to **this present evil age** (Galatians 1:4).

The writer to the Hebrews refers to **the powers of the age to come** (Hebrews 6:5).

Jesus Himself confirms to us that an age has an end when He gave the so-called great commission to His disciples: **"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"** (Matthew 28:20).

These are only a few of many verses that prove the writers of the New Testament, in particular, saw themselves in an age and that there are ages yet to come.

Forever and Ever

The third point is Greek has a singular form, *aiōn*, and a plural, *aiōns*, which yields Anglicized phrases, such as *the eons of the eons*, *the eon of the eons*, and *the eon of the eon*. These phrases specifically refer to the last two eons, that is, the oncoming or impending eons that follow our present wicked eon or, simply, ages beyond our present one.

In some cases, translators ignore the plural forms in favor of a singular rendering. For example, Romans 16:27 is most often translated as *forever* (NASB) or *forever and ever* (KJV) but never as *forevers*, for this would make no sense. Concordantly speaking, it is rendered as *the eons of the eons* (CV) or *ages* (WED, YLT). The same applies to Galatians 1:5, Philippians 4:20, 1 Timothy 1:17, 2 Timothy 4:18, Hebrews 13:21, and 1 Peter 4:11.

Just for the sake of argument, if, in these cases, the Greek does refer to things eternal, then why use the phrase *forever and ever*? Would not the phrase *forever* be sufficient to convey the thought of eternal? It is an unneeded redundancy to add the word *ever*.

Again, following a concordant approach to Scripture yields other *eon* expressions, such as *the oncoming eons* (Ephesians 2:7), *from the eons* (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26), *for the eons* (Luke 1:33; Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Hebrews 13:8), *the eons* (Ephesians 3:11; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Jude 25), *the conclusion of the eons* (Hebrews 9:26), and *the consummation of the eons* (1 Corinthians 10:11; see 1 Corinthians 15:24). If you are more comfortable with the word *age*, just replace *eon* with *age*.

These verses alone should bring some clarity to the concept of an *eon*, for they reveal that there is more than one eon, there are eons to come, and there is a conclusion or a consummation of the eons. All one needs is an understanding of the meaning of the word *eon*, and these verses can be better understood contextually.

The Son Makes the Eons

The fourth point is that the eons and the Son of God are inseparable. We must never lose sight of God's Son in our understanding of the eons or in our understanding of all Scripture, for that matter. It is essential that we understand that through His Son, God makes the eons, and that *the eons begin and end in His Son*. It is *in Him* that we see the purpose of the eons.

(1) God, speaking to the fathers in the prophets, (2) in the last of these days speaks to us in a Son, Whom He appoints enjoyer of the allotment of all, through Whom He also makes the eons [ages].... (Hebrews 1:1-2 CV [REB])

Interpretative bias is clearly seen in this verse. Most translations render this as "through whom

He made *the world [aiōn]*" (NASB). Again, the Greek word is *aiōn* (eon), not *kosmos* (world). Truly, the Son created the world, but He also created time or the eons along with the world. We could say that He created the time-space continuum in which we live today.

He [the Son] brightly reflects God's glory and is the exact representation of His being, and upholds the universe by His all-powerful word (Hebrews 1:3 WNT).

Remove the Son from the universe and there is no universe. It is like removing the sun from our solar system. Remove the sun that shines upon our earth and human life on earth will cease to exist. Likewise, remove the Son from God's purpose and there is no purpose of God. All creation is held by the powerful word of the Son of God, who is the Word of God. The eons are nothing apart from the Son of God. He is the *Origin* and the *Consummation* of the eons.

Let this one truth be indelibly engraved on our hearts and in our minds: God established His purpose in His Son before He even brought forth the eons, and His purpose for the eons has been, is being, and will continue to be worked out in His Son until the glorious consummation of the eons (1 Corinthians 10:11), and God is *All* in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Before Times Eonian

In light of this truth, the fifth point is discovered in Paul's epistles where he refers to *before times eonian* or *before the eons*. I realize these are probably strange expressions to some, but they make sense if we think in terms of ages or eons.

God's purpose and promises in Christ were set before times eonian. In other words, God set these things in motion before time itself. Another way of stating this is that they were set before the eons or ages were made by the Son.

In fact, the eons are made (past, present, and future) to accomplish God's purpose in Christ.

Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus *before times eonian*.... (2 Timothy 1:9 CV)

(1) Paul, a slave of God, yet an apostle of Jesus Christ, in accord with the faith of God's chosen, and a realization of the truth, which accords with devoutness, (2) in expectation of life eonian, which God, Who does not lie, promises *before times eonian [age-during times]*.... (Titus 1:1-2 CV [REB])

(6) Yet wisdom are we speaking among the mature, yet a wisdom not of this eon, neither of the chief men of this eon, who are being discarded, (7) but we are speaking God's wisdom in a secret, (8) wisdom which has been concealed, which God designates *before-before the eons*, for our glory, which not one of the chief men of *this eon* knows, for if they know, they would not crucify the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2:6-8 CV)

Eonian God & Eonian Gospel

The final point involves the concept of the *eonian* God and the *eonian* gospel.

But now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of *the eternal* [aiōnios] God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.... (Romans 16:26 NASB)

Some translations use the word *everlasting* instead of *eternal*. The more literal translations use the phrases *eonian God* (*Concordant Literal*), *age-abiding God* (*Rotherham's Emphasized*), and *age-during God* (*Young's Literal*).

The most common argument against these phrases is they imply that God is not eternal or outside of time. Actually, there is no such inference in referring to God as the eonian God. In fact, it is a glorious assurance that our God has been working in time or in the eons through His Son. In no way does this take away from the fact that God is eternal. He is both eonian and eternal.

I recall being told about a book in which the writer was adamant in trying to prove that God is so outside of time that He has absolutely nothing to do with time. How could the Creator of all things divorce Himself from His creation that is in time? This is really not worth debating.

The same thing is discovered in reference to an eonian gospel.

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having *an eternal* [aiōnios] [*eonian; age-abiding*] gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.... (Revelation 14:6 NASB [CV, REB])

Is the gospel truly eternal, as most are taught? Perhaps, it is not, for at the consummation of the eons, all will be made new. It seems that once all is made new, the good news changes as well. Actually, I believe that the eonian gospel announced by the angel is the good news of the Age to come when the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9).

There is more to this subject, such as *eonian life*, which refers to *life in the Age* to come, and *eonian judgment* or *chastening*, which means that there are limits to how long God's judgments last. These are taken up in Chapters 14 and 16, respectively.

Perhaps, it is time to start reading Scripture with a view to the *eons* or *ages* and to that which is *eonian* or *age-during* (*lasting, abiding*).