

ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him the plan for the fullness of the times

**TO HEAD UP THE ALL THINGS IN THE CHRIST,
the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, in Him...**

(Ephesians 1:8b-10)

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Article #42

Life of the Ages [Eons]

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In accord with the purpose of the eons [ages], which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord...
(Ephesians 3:11 Concordant Version [CV])

To those on the one hand who, by lives of persistent right-doing, are striving for glory, honour and immortality, the Life of the Ages [eonian life, eternal life].... (Romans 2:7 WNT [CV, NASB])

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

Transliterated means to write or spell words, etc. in the characters of another alphabet that represents 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.

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 we derive our words ***eternal*** and ***secular*** (or, worldly), respectively. He chose ***aeternum***; however, it has a double meaning, either ***unending time*** or an ***age*** or ***eon***, as in a limited period of time.

Augustine, a contemporary of Jerome, was virtually ignorant of Greek so that when he read the Vulgate he took the word ***aeternum*** to mean eternal or unending time, 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 or eternal took root in the mind of many and has continued mostly unabated to our day.

Quoting from Dr. F.W. Farrar's book *Mercy and Judgment* (page 178): "*Since aion meant 'age,' aionios 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."

With the exception of four English translations (*Concordant Literal New Testament* [CV], *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* [REB], *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* [WED], and *Young's Literal Translation* [YLT]), English translations render the word *aiōnion* as *eternal*. As will be shown, the word *aiōn* is translated into many different words, further robbing it of its meaning, in what could be called *interpretative bias*.

Interpretative bias means that in translating from the original languages into another language, the translators used 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. Unfortunately, some of the bias has resulted in incorrect understanding of the truth of God's Word and has fed what Paul called "**the systematizing of the deception**" (Ephesians 4:14 CV).

It appears that *aiōn* and *aiōnion* have fallen victim to the type of deception that Paul warned us about. The incorrect interpretation of these words has become so pervasive that it has become part of the foundation of the gospel itself upon which doctrines are built. The result is that a deception has been systematically built into what many blindly and falsely accept as truth.

Down through the centuries, the concept of eternal (eternity) has been so systematically cemented into Christian doctrine that it has greatly obscured the truth of God's purpose of the eons to the point that *eternity* has become more like a **tradition of men**. We need to be reminded that Jesus was most critical of the elite religious rulers of Judah for this very thing (Mark 7:8).

Dear brethren, challenge your understanding. It is time to come out of the tradition of men and all deceptions. We need truth! Actually, we need spirit and truth!

What if the fundamental tenet of Scripture is actually the concept of *ages* or *eons*? Wouldn't this change the way you view Scripture and God's purpose and plan, or at least add some dimension to it that would otherwise be missed? I think so.

God's Purpose of the Eons

This article is not about God's purpose; although, it is touched upon. However, to make the point, the *Concordant Literal NT* (CV) and the *King James Version* (KJV) are presented in the following with special note of verse 11.

(8) To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, (9) and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, (10) that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the

celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, (11) in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord; (12) in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith. (Ephesians 3:8-12 CV)

(11) According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: (12) In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. (Ephesians 3:11-12 KJV)

The CV correctly translates the word *aiōn* as *eon* or *age*; the KJV incorrectly translates it as *eternal*. One tells us is that God's purpose is *age-during* or having to do with time, and the other tells us it is *endless* or having to do with outside of time. Which is it?

Frankly, I do not believe Scripture tells us much, if any, of what God has in store for us beyond the eons. The entire Bible is about God working out His purpose in the eons which He made through His Son (Hebrews 1:2 CV).

The most encouraging truth revealed in Scripture is that God has a purpose, and a multi-faceted plan to accomplish His purpose, which is all being worked out in the eons through His Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord. This purpose and plan extends to all mankind, but it does not stop with mankind, for it embraces all God's creation and created beings, both visible and invisible, in the heavens and on the earth.

The word *all* best sums up the purpose of the eons, **for out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!** (Romans 11:36 CV).

The eons are driving toward a glorious consummation, so that God may be *All* in all throughout His creation as He makes all things new (1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 21:5).

The Challenge

As already noted, there is a challenge to coming into the truth of the eons in that the word *eon* does not appear in most English Bibles. However, there is a second challenge, for most translations use the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, *eternity*, *eternal*, *forever*, *world*, or *age* for the same Greek words *aiōn* and *aiōnion*. Do you notice something odd about this list of words? They have different meanings. For example, 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 is one to make any sense out of God's Word?

In the Greek text, the word *aiōn* is used 128 times (singular [*aiōn*] and plural [*aiōnōn*] forms), and the word *aiōnion* is used 71 times.

Aiōn (and its forms) is translated in many English New Testaments nearly 40 different ways, 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.

In the *King James Version*, the Greek words *aiōn* and *aiōnion* are translated using the following English words (the number of times each word appears is noted):

<i>aiōn (eon)</i>				<i>aiōnion (eonian)</i>	
Ages	2	Never	7	Everlasting	25
Course	1	Evermore	4	Eternal	42
World	40	Eternal	2	World	3
Ever	72			Ever	1

These statistics, alone, should be a red flag to anyone who is diligently seeking for the truth. How can nearly forty English words for two Greek word not produce confusion or, worse, downright error? How can two words have such divergent usage and maintain the true meaning 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*.

Isn't it 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 seeker of truth to discern the meaning of the verses?

From this point forward, the words *age*, *eon*, and *eonian* are used exclusively with the understanding that they are the English equivalents of the words *aiōn* and *aiōnion*, respectively.

Concordant Method

Most who read the Bible daily do not have a working knowledge of Hebrew or Greek. However, there is a way to study Scripture, and it is called *the concordant method*, which takes a Hebrew or Greek word, finds all the places it is used in Scripture, and then determines its usage, and thus its meaning based on all the texts in which it is discovered. Anyone can do this with a concordance in hand, such as *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*, or *Young's Analytical Concordance*, to name a few.

The editors of *The Concordant Literal New Testament with Keyword Concordance* (CV) followed the concordant method in order to produce the most literal rendering of Scripture as possible. The editors investigated each and every Hebrew or Greek word found in ancient manuscripts in order to find the single most exact English equivalent for each and every word. For example, instead of having many English words for one Greek word, they assigned only one English word for each Greek word, and this English word was not used for any other Greek word. Further, they chose English words based on the most accurate and consistent meaning as presented every place the words appeared in the available manuscripts.

Thus, when one reads an English word in the CV, no matter where it is discovered in Scripture, the word presumably has the same meaning. This method helps to reduce interpretative bias; however, it does not eliminate it entirely. After all, the editors of all translations are but weak vessels, as we all are, especially those of us who attempt to write exposition of Scripture.

The CV is not perfect, and undoubtedly, there is interpretative bias built into it, as there are in all translations; nevertheless, it is quite helpful. Keep in mind that the English Bibles of our day are translations of manuscripts written mostly in Hebrew or Greek. These manuscripts are copies of the original text, which were lost long ago. To claim that one English Bible is the inspired Word of God over all other translations, as if it were an exact replica of the original text, is dangerous, if not error. I find it helpful to compare the several translations that attempt to remain as literal as possible to the Hebrew or Greek. However, the CV is recommended as a useful tool in studying God's Word.

Before moving on, we need to touch upon the Hebrew language in light of the eons.

***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. However, 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. However, 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." One example comes from *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* (REB): **Your throne, O God is to times age-abiding** [*olam*] **and beyond** [*va ad*].

Apparent Contradictions

Now, to further prove the points made so far, 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)

If these two verses are allowed to stand unchallenged, then there is a clear contradiction of Scripture. However, the problem lies not with the inspired Word of God but with the man-inspired translations of God's words.

Just in case you have missed the inconsistency in the KJV, answer this question: How can the world have an end and also have no end? In other words, the KJV clearly states that the world has both an end and is endless.

The problem starts with the fact that the word *world* has no place in these verses, for the Greek word is *aiōn*. The Greek word for *world* is *kosmos*; however, this word is not in these verses in the original Greek. Following the concordant approach, these verses literally should read:

Thus shall it be in the conclusion of the eon.

For all the generations of the eon of the eons.

Note that the concordant rendering of these verses has 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. We need to see that the focus of these verses is on a period of time, an *eon*, and not on the world. The world must either end or go on endlessly, but *eons* have a beginning and an end. In considering verses dealing with *eons*, we need to understand which *eon* is in view, and when we do, there is no contradiction of Scripture.

Forever and Ever

A fact that is lost in most English translations is that in some expressions in which the word *aiōn* appears in the Greek text, it is in both the singular (*aiōn*) and plural (*aiōns*) form. Using the Anglicized word *eon* or *eons*, we discover the phrases *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. Reading most English Bibles one would never see this and would never be able to even question its meaning, for these phrases generally appear as *forever and ever* (e.g., Romans 16:27; Galatians 1:5; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 4:11; all in the KJV).

Those who have understanding of the Greek language state that it sometimes uses the plural and singular forms differently than we do in the English language; that is, the plural can refer to the singular. I must confess that I am not sure if this is the case with these words; however, if the translators rendered *forever and ever* in the singular or plural form, as in the Greek, the result would have been the phrases *forevers and evers*, *forever and evers*, and *forever and ever*. Perhaps, realizing the difficulty of such renderings, most translators have chosen to ignore the plurality of the Greek.

By using the phrase *forever and ever*, the translators are trying to convey the idea of *eternal* or *eternity*. Just for the sake of argument, if the Greek does refer to the concept of eternity, 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*. Some argue that it is used to add force to the idea of being forever or eternal. If this alone were the issue, then there might be some credence to such a notion; however, it is not the only issue, for we would still have to answer the question of why the Greek words are in the singular or the plural.

Let us put aside the traditions of men for a moment and see if Scripture has another answer for us. If we allow Scripture to stand on its own, we discover the expressions *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).

These verses alone should resolve any doubt in one's mind as to the concept of an eon, for they clearly 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 begin to make sense.

However, this is not the case if we were to substitute the words *forever*, *everlasting*, or *eternal* in these phrases because in the plural form they would read *the oncoming forevers*, or *the oncoming eternals*, or the *consummation of the forevers*, or *the consummation of the everlastings*. In these examples, what would *forevers* or *everlastings* mean? It would imply that eternity consists of many eternities. How can forever have a consummation? It would imply that forever truly is not forever. Do you see the problems created by such translations of the Greek words *aiōn* and *aiōns*?

Let us consider a few points.

The Son Makes the Eons

The first 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). Note that 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 1:10), and God is *All* in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Before Times Eonian

In light of this truth, the second point is discovered in Paul's epistles where he refers to *before times eonian* or *before the eons*. God's purpose and promises in Christ were set before times eonian. Another way of stating this is that they were set before the eons 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)

All the Eons

The next 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*.

(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)

Notice how Jude also refers to *the entire eon*, which refers to our present eon.

Meaning of Eon

The fourth point is the English meaning of the word *eon*. Webster's Dictionary defines it as "an extremely long, indefinite period of time, thousands and thousands of years." Interestingly, 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.

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.*"

We might debate when these 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 will last 1,000 years?

Eonian God & Eonian Gospel

The fifth point involves the concept of God being eternal.

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 Version), *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.

The same thing is discovered in reference to the gospel which is eonian.

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. Clearly, there is an eonian gospel going forth, that is, good news related to the eons or ages to come.

Eonian [Eternal] Life

The sixth point is probably the most difficult to grasp for most who have been taught that the gospel is all about eternal life. But, does Scripture truly promise eternal life in the sense that most think of it? Let us look at Jesus' word that has formed the basis of countless gospel messages.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NASB)

For God did so love the world, that His Son--the only begotten--He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during [life eonian; life age-abiding; aionian Life]. (John 3:16 YLT [CV, REB, WED])

The classic rendering is *eternal life*, but the literal rendering is *age-during* or *eonian life*. Obviously, one rendering promises life outside of time and the other promises life in time. Which is it? Before answering, let us consider another passage.

(29) And Jesus answering said, 'Verily I say to you, there is no one who left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or fields, for my sake, and for the good news', (30) who may not receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and fields, with persecutions, and in the age that is coming, life age-during [aionian Life]; (31) and many first shall be last, and the last first.' (Mark 10:29-31 YLT [WED])

Clearly, Jesus made no mention of life outside of time. He promised His disciples life in the age or eon that was coming. What age is this? It is the very age that all of Judah was looking for when the Anointed One stood in their midst. Even Paul referred to the age to come, as well as the ages to come (Ephesians 1:21; 2:7).

The Age to come is called by several names, such the Messianic Age, the Kingdom Age, and the Tabernacles Age. This age comes when heaven proclaims: **"The kingdoms of the world did become those of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign to the ages of the ages"** Revelation 11:15 YLT). It is the thousand-year age that follows the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6) or out-resurrection of which Paul longed to be a part (Philippians 3:11).

The Age to come is about who will enter it to reign with Christ, seated upon His throne. This is all about the conquerors, for they are the ones who will receive eonian life in the Age to come.

To the one who is conquering, to him will I be granting to be seated with Me on My throne as I, also conquer, and am seated with My Father on His throne. (Revelation 3:21 CV)

Those who are counted worthy of the Age to come are the ones who have conquered in our present wicked age. The rest of the dead will have to wait until the completion of the Age. The ages to come commence with the Great White Throne when many believers will be saved, yet

so as through fire, and unbelievers will be judged by the fiery law of God, not for the purpose of torture but for discipline and correction, as well for salvation.

The conquerors will come into eonian life as immortals. In other words, they will receive immortal life. But the main point is that they will receive it because they are given eonian life in the Age to come. Eonian life is a matter of timing, whereas immortality is a matter of quality. Eonian life is immortal life in the Age to come.

Do you realize that the ecclesia, which is His Body, is His complement, that is, His likeness and that His Body will be intimately engaged with their Head **in the summing up or heading up all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth** (Ephesians 1:10). Who would want to miss out on the Life of the Ages?

Another way to explain this is that eonian life is dependent on the eons, for it speaks of life in time and, more specifically, life in the coming eons, starting with the Kingdom Age, the eon when Christ, through His conquerors, rules over our present earth as the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9). Eonian life for the conquerors starts at the end of our present wicked or evil eon [age] (Galatians 1:4). Others will follow in God's Day which follows the Lord's Day or Kingdom Age, when a new heaven and a new earth come into view.

Eonian life is promised to all believers; the question is when each one will enter into this life, in the Age to come or in the age after the Age.

Again, let us consider the companion verse to Mark 10:30. Notice that the CV has chosen to use the expression *life eonian*, which is the same as *eonian life*. The traditional rendering is presented from the NASB, for comparison.

Who may not by all means be getting back manyfold in this era, and in the coming eon, life eonian [aionian Life]. (Luke 18:30 CV [WED])

Who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life. (Luke 18:30 NASB)

Again, eonian life is joined with the age or eon to come. This is significant; Jesus does not make the point that it is about dying and going to heaven where, as far as we know, there is no time. In other words, there is reward in the Age to come for those who are faithful to the Lord and bring forth Kingdom fruit in this age. The reward is to have eonian life, that is, to come alive to live on the earth, as well as in the spirit realm, in the next age, which is the age of the Kingdom of Christ.

This may be difficult to grasp, given what so many of us have been taught; but, for the most part, eonian life is not about a life in eternity or in heaven, for that matter, but a life in the Age to come and the ages leading up to the consummation of the eons. We have not been taught to think in terms of ages, but it appears that Scripture makes the point for us.

Paul referred to the **ages to come** (Ephesians 2:7), meaning that there is more than one. It is possible that before the consummation of the eons comes there are many eons. After all, God's plan calls for all mankind to be purified by His righteous law described as a lake of fire, a consuming fire that judges works, not bodies. This may take many millennia to accomplish until all have paid the last farthing (Matthew 5:26; Luke 12:47-48).

Immortal Life

The seventh point is that immortality ensures one has the Life of the Ages, referring to all the unknown ages or eons yet to come. Don't think for a moment that this means that there is no eternal life, for there most certainly is; immortality demands a life beyond death, that is, an endless life or a life outside of time altogether. Immortality ensures that one will enjoy all of what God will be doing in the ages leading up to the consummation of the ages and beyond.

However, technically speaking, eonian life is not the same as immortal life. **Eonian life is life in an age, and immortality is life beyond death, regardless of the age.** Immortal life is not dependent on the eons, or time, and space. Immortal life is the promise for all believers. The issue is when one enters into immortal life in the true and full sense.

The Greek word *athanasia* is translated as *immortal*, which means "deathlessness" or "beyond death" as seen in the following verses.

(53) For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. (54) But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality.... (1 Corinthians 15:53-54 NASB)

(15) He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, (16) who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Timothy 6:15-16 NASB)

Clearly, immortality is life beyond death, never to be subjected to the possibility of death. This should be the hope and expectation of all believers. However, it would be remiss if we did not add that it also is the ultimate destiny of all mankind when, at the consummation of the eons, God the Father is all in all.

Contrary to the tradition of men, immortality does not come about when one dies, that is, through death of the mortal body. It comes about with the redemption of our body that occurs with resurrection and transfiguration; a future event for which Christians should be waiting eagerly (Romans 8:23). No one has immortality at this point in time, for as shown above, **the King of kings and the Lord of lords alone possesses immortality** [*athanasia*].

The **redemption of the body** comes with the placing or **adoption as sons** (Romans 8:23) when this mortal puts on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53). It is when we put on our dwelling from heaven so that what is mortal is swallowed up by life (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). It is when we are glorified into the image of the Son of God. This does not take place in death; it takes place with resurrection and transfiguration.

However, even among believers, all will not put on immortality **at the same time**. Some will put it on at the first resurrection that commences the Lord's Day, and others will put it on at the second resurrection that commences God's Day. The first fruits anointed of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:23) will be the first to come into immortality as they are raised from among the dead in the **first resurrection** (Revelation 20:5-6) or the **out-resurrection** (Philippians 3:11), also referred to as the **better resurrection** (Hebrews 11:35). The rest of the believers will follow 1,000 years later, brought forth from death in the second resurrection to appear before the **Great White Throne**, where they **will be saved, yet so as through fire** (1 Corinthians 3:15), and the unbelievers will face the judgment of the lake of fire where they will be justified by faith.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. (Revelation 20:5 NASB)

Another reference to immortal life is found in Paul's explanation of Melchizedek. In the Greek, the word *akatalutos* is properly used to express immortality, and Paul uses it to contrast the Levitical priesthood with the Melchizedek priesthood. The Levites were placed as priests based on a law of physical requirement, that is, based on their genealogy or bloodline that was traced to Levi. These priests died and had to be replaced with other mortals of the same genetic line. But God's Son is a high priest of an entirely different order based on the law of life.

(15) And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, (16) who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible [*akatalutos*] life. (17) For it is attested of Him, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." (Hebrews 7:15-17 NASB)

Some translations use the word *endless* in place of *indestructible*, but the meaning is the same, for it means that death has no power over such a life. Death is what destroys (brings destruction to) life, but **the power of the indestructible life** ensures that death has no more power over such a life.

God declared that His Son is of this new order, but there are to be more king-priests to follow of the same order. They are the conquerors who will reign with Christ for 1,000 years, but to do so, they too must possess an indestructible life that comes about when this mortal will have put on immortality. Again, this only comes through the first resurrection if one is to reign with Christ in the next age.

Now, Paul joins immortality with eonian life.

(5) But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, (6) who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: (7) to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life [life eonian; life age-abiding]; (8) but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. (Romans 2:5-8 NASB [CV, REB])

In verse 7, Paul joins immortal life to eternal life, or, using the concordant method, immortality is joined to eonian life or life eonian [CV], which means that the context makes the two terms nearly synonymous with each other. However, consider how the Weymouth words it.

To those on the one hand who, by lives of persistent right-doing, are striving for glory, honour and immortality, the Life of the Ages.... (Romans 2:7 WNT)

The Life of the Ages indicates that immortal life is a life for many ages not just for eternity. Of course, it is for eternity as well, but the point is that there are ages to come, a point that has been made repeatedly.

Chastening Eonian; Age-Abiding Correction

Finally, there is one other point that needs to be made that might seem a bit contradictory. Eonian life is not restricted to those who will put on immortality as the next eon commences. Simply, all who are immortal in the next eon will have eonian life in the next eon, but others also will have eonian life in the next eon but not necessarily immortal life at that time.

In the oncoming eon, mortals (typified by nations) will continue to live on earth; some will enjoy it by receiving an inheritance (i.e., a part) in the Kingdom, others will not. When the Son of Mankind comes in His glory, seated upon His throne of glory, He will divide the sheep nations from the goat (kid) nations.

"And these [kid nations] shall be coming away into chastening eonian [age-abiding correction], yet the just [sheep nations] into life eonian." (Matthew 25:46 CV [REB])

The King of Glory will reward the sheep nations with life eonian, meaning they will **"enjoy the allotment [inheritance] of the kingdom"** (Matthew 25:34 CV). *Chastening eonian* does not mean that the kid nations will be tormented in man's hell or annihilated altogether. They will be ruled over with a rod or club of iron to teach them righteousness (Isaiah 26:9) with the ultimate goal of restoring them, which is the purpose of **fire eonian** (Matthew 25:41 CV), which is the divine law of God (the Word of the Lord). After all, the Lord declares: **"Is not My word like fire?"** (Jeremiah 23:29). As *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* states, it is for correction carried out during the age.

The sheep nations will enter eonian life, which means they will have a part in the Kingdom on earth, but it does not mean that they will be immortal at this point in time. Some will die during the age and some, undoubtedly, will live for the entire 1,000 years. The resurrection to the Great White Throne will lead the nations into immortality for the age commencing with a new heaven and a new earth when New Jerusalem begins to fill the earth.

Contrary to much teaching, God's chastening or correction is not eternal; it is eonian, meaning there is a limit to how long His chastening in His fiery law will last. It cannot last beyond the consummation of the eons when a grand Jubilee is called for all of creation.

Conclusion

The point of this article is not to challenge anyone's faith or teaching but to offer, perhaps, a more accurate way to understand Scripture in light of the eons or ages to come.

As I have been in fellowship with many brethren over the years, I have seldom heard someone looking forward to the ages to come. Without much doubt, the primary emphasis has been and continues to be mostly on eternal life and going to heaven and walking on streets of gold. Seldom do I hear that one is striving to be a conqueror so that he or she will be counted worthy to rule and reign with Christ on earth in the next age and beyond.

I leave you with a word from Paul.

(4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (6) and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7 NASB)

Notice the reason why we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places or among the celestials (CV).

So that in the ages to come....

Let us long for the Life of the Ages! God desires to show us something glorious!