

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Conception of the Orderly Arrangement

In scripture, we discover the expression *the foundation [disruption] of the world*, which appears ten times: Matthew 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3; 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8. Depending on the translation, this phrase begins with one of three prepositions: *since, before, from*. Also, in some translations, the word *disruption* is used in place of *foundation*.

Now, what does this expression mean?

Let's begin with the word *world*, which comes from the Greek transliterated word *kosmos* (G2889), meaning "orderly arrangement, implying the world in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants" [Strong's *Concordance*]. Going along with its wide application, another reference breaks down the word into seven categories: a) as created order, universe (John 1:10); b) earth, inhabited world (Matthew 4:8); c) all humanity (Matthew 5:14); d) metaphor of all in the world at enmity with God (John 12:31); e) figuratively of large number (John 12:19); f) sum, epitome (James 3:6); g) adornment (1 Peter 3:3) [Wigram's *New Englishman's Greek-English Concordance & Lexicon*]. To round this out: *kosmos* differs from the Greek word *ge*, which is translated as *earth*, which comes from a primary word for *soil*.

In the new testament, *kosmos* is used nearly 250 times in the variety of applications, as noted by Wigram. Peter wrote of the ancient *kosmos* and the *kosmos* at that time (2 Peter 2:5; 3:6), meaning there was an ancient orderly arrangement. John wrote that the *kosmos* or orderly arrangement of man that is driven by lust is passing away (1 John 2:17). Paul wrote that Jesus came into the *kosmos* or orderly arrangement that existed 2,000 years ago and that there is a *kosmos* or orderly arrangement to come in the next age (Hebrews 10:5, 2:5). Given all this, context determines its application.

Moving on; the word *foundation*, which comes from the Greek transliterated word *katabole* (G2602), means "a deposition, that is, founding." Figuratively, it means "conception," as in birthing something. Through its root words, it has the sense of throwing something down. *Katabole* comes from *kataballo* (G2598) which means "to throw down or cast down." *Kataballo* comes from two words: *kata* (G2596) meaning "down (in place or time)," and *ballo* (G906) meaning to "throw; cast out, or throw down" [Strong's *Concordance*]. The word *foundation* (*katabole*) is not so much about a structure, such as a physical foundation of a building, as it is about the act or process of laying down the structure, more or less violently or intensely. Something is cast or thrown down in order to conceive or bring forth something else. It is like casting a seed or giving birth.

The idea of conception is discovered in Sarah who conceived beyond her natural years. In the following verse, the word *sperma*, from which we derive our English word *sperm*, is used in conjunction with *katabole*. *Sperma* refers not only to the male sperm but in a broader sense to something sown as in a seed. The *Concordant Literal Version* uniformly translates *katabole* as *disruption*, defining it as "disruption of the world or cosmos, prefiguring the result of sin; physiologically, the discharge of seed from the ovaries (Hebrews 11:11)."

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive [disruption of seed] (*katabole*, *sperma*), and was delivered of a child when she was past age.... (Hebrews 11:11 KJV [CLV])

Now, the Greek word *apo* (G575) is a primary participle meaning *off*, that is, *away* (from), in various senses (of place, time, or relation; literally or figuratively)" [Strong's *Concordance*], and is translated a variety of ways, such as *after*, *ago*, *before*, *by* (*the space of*), *for*, *from* *since*, to name a few. Of the ten uses of the phrase, the word *apo* precedes it in seven verses. Dr. Bullinger claims these refer to the kingdom. Matthew 13:35 speaks of things hidden *from* (*since* [NASB]) the foundation of the world. Matthew 25:34 speaks of the kingdom prepared *from* the foundation of the world. Luke 11:50 speaks of shed blood of the prophets *from* (*since* [NASB]) the foundation of the world. Hebrews 4:3 speaks of His works finished *from* the foundation of the world. Hebrews 9:26 speaks in the negative of Christ suffering *from* (*since* [NASB]) the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8 speaks of the Lambkin slain *from* the foundation of the world. Revelation 17:8 speaks of names written in the Lambkin's book *from* the foundation of the world.

The Greek word *pro* (G4253) is a primary preposition meaning "fore, that is, *in front of*, *prior* (figuratively *superior*) *to*" [Strong's *Concordance*], translated as *above*, *ago*, *before*, *ever*. Of the ten uses of the phrase, the word *pro* precedes it in three verses. Dr. Bullinger claims these refer to the "purpose" of God. John 17:24 speaks of the Father's love for His Son *before* the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4 speaks of saints being chosen in Him *before* the foundation of the world. 1 Peter 1:20 speaks of Christ being foreknown *before* the foundation of the world. It is interesting that these verses refer not only to the Son but also to His brethren (saints) before the foundation, meaning before the disruption.

Further parsing of *from* or *before* is not necessary. What is more important is the fact that the defining point of all the expressions is the *disruption* of Genesis 1. A question that has been hotly debated is whether there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. It goes something like this: In the beginning, God created the earth with an orderly arrangement (beauty) and then something happened to bring it into ruin and chaos, after which He had to restore it (Genesis 1:2b ff). Some see the ruin resulting from some great cosmic angelic battle instigated by a satan. Years ago, I held to the gap theory and wrote about it. After all, Isaiah 45:18 (CLV) says: *He did not create it a chaos. He formed it to be indwelt*. Yes; but this doesn't mean God didn't use chaos to get there. Here is my new insight.

Taking the meaning of *katabole* as a *conception* and *kosmos* as an *orderly arrangement*, could we not rephrase *from the disruption of the world* into ***from the conception of the orderly arrangement***? Maybe what God wants us to see is a metaphorical picture of the earth being like a huge seed. *Elohim* in His infinite creative love and wisdom, cast or threw down the seed of the earth into the womb of His universe. At its inception, it appeared as if in chaos and ruin; within this was hidden God's divine order. Perhaps, the chaos was a form of death as a type of God's divine law of death to life. It was like *Elohim* cast down a seed into the ground to die; only this time, the earth itself was the seed. Clearly, Jesus was the prototype of this casting down (John 12:24). After all, He was slain from the conception of the orderly arrangement. God as Son conceived earth in germ, *sperma* form and proceeded to bring forth order and life; a beautiful, orderly arrangement that He declared *very good* (Genesis 1:31). The result was a paradise, the perfection of divine order, a germinating seed that died (disorder) to bring forth life (order). This would mean that Genesis 1 is one continuous record with no gap built into it and just might be proof that God actually created through some level of what we would call *chaos* or *ruin* (no challenge for God) that could have continued for a very long time, until God was ready to creatively act. I'll go one step further—within chaos is divine order. Or, stated another way—divine order comes out of chaos. Regardless of how one views this matter, let us be encouraged that God is after His divine order of All in all, and His Son assures us that it will be so beyond our wildest imaginations.