

Focus on the Kingdom

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How to Study the Bible

An excerpt from *The Gospel of the Kingdom* by Wiley Jones (1879)

“Search the Scriptures” (John 5:39).

“They eagerly received the word [Gospel], and searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Therefore many of them believed” (Acts 17:11-12).

1. We should study the Bible with *delight*.

The holy writers, although endowed with inspiration themselves, used to take delight in studying the written word. Thus Paul, “I delight in the law of God” (Rom. 7:22). And the Psalmist, “How sweet are Your words to my taste! Sweeter than honey to my mouth! O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all day long” (Psa. 119:97, 103). “Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord” (Ps. 1:2). And even the Great Redeemer himself read the Holy Scriptures: it was “his custom” (Luke 4:16). Why then should not *we* delight in the study of that sacred volume? It is commended to us as “able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). All through life it is a lamp to our feet and a guide to our steps: “You guide me by Your counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory” (Ps. 73:24). In earliest youth it comes to us with the timely exhortation, “Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecc. 12:1). In the feverish battle of life it gives many a cooling sip of “precious promises,” and, like a ministering angel, at the dying hour it softly whispers, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Your rod and Your staff comfort me” (Ps. 23:4).

That the Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed on mankind is generally acknowledged by all who have taken the pains to acquaint themselves with the value and worth of it. I once heard a pious and learned young Christian say, “The more I study the Bible, the more I want to study it.” But we cannot briefly enumerate its countless benefits and therefore, with these few seed-thoughts on its preciousness, I pass to a second branch of the subject.

2. We should study the Bible with *child-like submission* to its dictates.

The Bible is the sovereign test in all matters, whether of faith or practice. “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it

is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). “Examine everything, and hold firmly to what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). An authoritative message has been sent from the throne of God, and therefore the formation of our religious creed is no longer left to the dreams of imagination, or the speculations of philosophy; but it is to be deduced fairly and honestly from the written record alone. The apostles wrought real and true miracles in confirmation of what they said; and yet the Bereans examined even their teachings by the test of scripture; they “searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed” (Acts 17:11). And they were commended as “noble” for their conduct. How much more necessary then is it for us to examine what we hear (no matter *who* may say it), and to have a “Thus says the Lord” or a “Thus it is written” for every article of our faith and practice!

But many believers of error pride themselves on the witness of their own heart, or the teaching of the spirit within them, as they call it. They ought to remember however that the Spirit of God in the heart would not in one jot or tittle contradict the Spirit of God in the Bible, for the Spirit of God nowhere contradicts the word of God. When Paul said, “The Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16), he was speaking of himself and those early disciples who, like him, had believed the *gospel of the kingdom*, and also had been *immersed* “for the remission of sins.” But I once heard a man who had neither believed that gospel nor received that immersion apply this language to himself, as proof of his being a Christian; but this was a glaring misapplication and perversion of that scripture. The feelings of the heart are never to be trusted where they conflict with the written word...

The modern theory of sincerity is not found in the Bible. Its advocates tell us that even idolaters will be saved, if they are sincere, and live up to the light they have. Paul did not preach that modern gospel of sincerity (which is a delusion and a snare), but faithfully declared “the gospel of *the kingdom*” as the Master had commanded (Matt. 24:14; Acts 20:25). If every man’s own sincerity of heart were to be made the standard and evidence of what is right, would not all the various and conflicting sects of Protestantism, Catholicism and Paganism have an equal claim to be right? For I suppose they all claim to be *sincere*, and to have some sort of an approving witness in their own hearts...

3. We should study the Bible by heeding the “sure word of prophecy.”

In order that our faith may be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20), we should study the *whole* Bible, and not merely that part which was written by the apostles. The same God speaks to us through both the prophets and the apostles. When the Savior said, “Search the Scriptures” (John 5:39), that portion of the Bible called the New Testament had not been written. Hence neglecting the study of the prophets would be neglecting this command of the Savior. The apostles likewise require us to be mindful of “the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets” (2 Pet. 3:2), and they declare that in taking heed to the word of prophecy we “do well.” It is a “light” which we dare not hide under a bushel (2 Pet. 1:19). Behold what a value the Savior has attached to the prophets, and to the convincing power of their testimony: “If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead” (Luke 16:31). And again, “All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me” (Luke 24:44). Their great themes ought to command the devout attention of every one who truly loves the Savior, for they speak of “the sufferings destined for Christ, and the glories after these things” (1 Pet. 1:11). The glories include His resurrection, His ascension, His intercession above, and His future return “with power and great glory” to take His seat on “the throne of His glory” (Matt. 24:30; 25:31)...

4. We should study the Bible by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

All the plain texts, from Genesis to Revelation, relating to any particular subject, must be taken together impartially compared, and the expressions of one of them restricted by those of another, and explained in mutual consistency. Then, the doctrine fairly deduced from them all in conjunction is the doctrine of the Bible on that particular subject. We are not to expect in every place the whole circle of Christian truth to be fully stated, and therefore no conclusion should be drawn from the absence of a doctrine from one passage so long as we can find that doctrine clearly stated in another.

This is a rule of common sense, and is so just and so essential to a right understanding of the Bible, or indeed of any other book, that I wonder it is not observed by all. And yet in a vast number of instances it is neglected, sometimes through mere indolence, and sometimes through a desire to deceive others...Many Protestants violate this rule in matters of utmost

importance. For instance, the three following truths which, as great first principles, every person in the world ought to be acquainted with, are clearly taught in the Bible.

1. That “THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM” is what the Lord Jesus preached in Palestine during all His personal ministry. The proof of this is too clear to be denied. “Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of **the kingdom**” (Matt. 4:23; 9:35). “He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the Gospel of **the kingdom of God**” (Luke 8:1). And in the sacred interval between His resurrection and ascension He conversed with His disciples, “being seen by them for forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to **the kingdom of God**” — the earliest and the latest theme of His teaching on earth (Acts 1:3).

2. “THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM” is what the apostles went forth and preached in all the world after He ascended. They did this by express directions of the Master who towards the close of His own personal ministry said to them, by way of prediction and command, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” (Matt. 24:14). Any tolerably bright youth in a Sunday school ought to be able to tell you that the Savior’s own personal ministry was confined to the land of Palestine. By whom, then, was it preached in all the world? Certainly not by the hostile Scribes and Pharisees, nor the sneering Gentile philosophers. It must therefore have been preached by the Apostles, for it was they whom the Master appointed to that work, saying, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “**You** will be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). And though dead, we may say that they are still preaching it in *their writings* (but not in their self-styled “successors”), wherever the Bible is read, or translated into a new dialect by the noble Bible Societies. The words of the Master — “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” — are plain enough proof that it was preached in Corinth, Rome, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, and in every other place to which Paul or any other apostle went.

3. After one of the apostles had been a long time engaged in preaching “The gospel of the kingdom” he wrote to some who had heard it, saying, “Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any OTHER gospel to you than that which WE have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I now say again, If

ANY man preach any OTHER gospel to you than the one you have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9).

These three great truths may be expressed in the following short and easily remembered sentence — *The Lord Jesus and His apostles preached THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM; and a double curse has been pronounced against man or angel who shall dare to preach any other gospel.*

“Among Things of First Importance”

And now, in the face of all these facts, is it not surprising to find some persons taking an isolated text (1 Cor. 15:3-4) and, contrary to sound criticism and right interpretation, endeavoring to prove from it that Paul at Corinth did not preach the kingdom, but preached only the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior? In that text the words *en protois*, translated “first of all,” are defined by Liddell & Scott’s Lexicon (1849) to be “like the Latin *in primis*, **among the first.**” The phrase might be accurately rendered “among primaries.” Campbell’s edition (1832) says, “among the first things.” Whitby’s paraphrase says, “among the principal doctrines of faith.” Thus we see that the death, burial and resurrection, although essential things, were not the *only* things preached at Corinth, but were “among” certain other things elsewhere called “the things concerning the **kingdom of God**” (Acts 19:8).

Those preachers who declaim against us must admit that it would be a wretched sophism, extremely stupid and unfair, to take Acts 20:25 and argue from it that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ were not preached or believed in at Ephesus, merely because those events are not mentioned in that text. Now on the *same* principle it would be an equally stupid and unfair sophism to take 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4 and argue from it that the doctrine of the kingdom was not preached or believed in at Corinth, merely because the kingdom is not mentioned in that text.

Our opponents try to justify their silence concerning the kingdom by saying that in sundry places conversions are described where there is not express mention of preaching the kingdom. But we rebut this piece of sophistry by proving that in sundry places we have the history of conversions where there *is* express mention of preaching the *kingdom*. See **Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8, 20; 20:25; 28:23, 31**. And now let me emphasize this question — whether it is wiser or safer to *include* “the things of the kingdom” in our preaching and faith; and thus have a *whole* and *true* gospel; or to leave out those things of the kingdom as though they were never mentioned in Scripture, and thus have a fragmentary and perverted gospel? To all men, women and children of common sense, this question is submitted.

To suppose from such texts as 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 that Paul at Corinth did not preach the gospel of the kingdom, nor require the Corinthians to believe it, is to misunderstand those texts, and to absurdly set Paul against Paul, for it would be accusing him of preaching a very different faith and hope in Corinth from what he preached in Ephesus and Rome; and indeed from what all the apostles were required to preach everywhere, for the command was general: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in **all** the world” (Matt. 24:14). Since therefore the gospel of the kingdom covers the *whole field* of apostolic preaching, it is plain that whatever short phrase is used to designate what was preached at Corinth and other places, “This gospel of the kingdom” is always *implied* if not expressed in that phrase.

Preaching Christ = Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, it is implied in the official title “Christ,” which means “Anointed” (John 1:41). He is anointed for the *three* offices of *Prophet*, to teach; *Priest*, to intercede; and *King*, to reign. The “great salvation” is comprised in the performance of these three offices. We are by nature ignorant, guilty and enslaved. To remove ignorance is the office of a prophet; to remove guilt, the office of a priest; and to liberate, lead to victory and protect in a safe home and country is the office of a king. The Redeemer’s prophetic office was foretold in Isaiah 61:1-3: “The Lord has **anointed** me to preach good news to the meek...” His priestly office in Daniel 9:26: “After 62 weeks the Messiah (i.e. the *Anointed*) will be cut off, but not *for himself*,” which means that He “died for **our** sins.” His Kingly office in Psalm 2: “The rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His **Anointed** (rendered Christ in Acts 4:26)...Yet I have set my **King** upon my holy hill of **Zion**...I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the **utmost parts of the earth** for your possession.” Here the *territory* and the *royal city* of the king are specified with the utmost clearness.

And now if it be enquired, “How did Christ perform the office of Prophet?” I answer, by teaching men the will of God, personally when He was on earth and afterwards in giving them the Holy Scriptures. How does He perform the office of Priest? By having once offered himself a Sacrifice on the cross, and by still making intercession as the one Mediator between God and man. How will He perform the office of king? By descending from heaven, liberating the righteous from the bondage of sin and sorrow, giving them the victory over death and blessing them with endless life and happiness in the everlasting kingdom which He will then establish on the earth.

And so we see that the title “Christ” is a very comprehensive one. That it includes the doctrine of the kingdom can also be seen by comparing the **5th and 12th verses of Acts 8**, for while one verse tells us that Philip preached “Christ,” the other explains it by saying that he preached “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” I have now proved that the apostles preached and the early Christians believed the gospel of the kingdom. And no man in his senses ought to dispute the self-evident assertion that *we* are required to believe the *same* gospel; for there is but one true gospel, one faith and one hope, for all times, places and people, from the apostolic age until now (Eph. 4:4.-6; Jude 3).

Marginal References

By instructive illustrations I have shown the importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Our Lord has left us an example of this: “Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). And the first chapter of Hebrews contains many quotations, *culled* from a wide field of Scripture, on the subject of the superiority of Christ to angels. For readily finding the testimonies on any subject, a Concordance and a Bible with a good selection of marginal references will be of great service. Although the marginal references were not arranged by inspiration, but are a human work and therefore imperfect in some instances, yet a discriminating reader will still find them serviceable; and indeed it is wonderful what a vast amount of accurate and valuable information can be obtained by their assistance.

For example, in studying the first verse of the New Testament, the marginal references are of thrilling interest. From Abraham to David were fourteen, and from David to Christ were twenty-eight generations; we are naturally led to enquire, therefore, Why is the Savior called **the Son of David, the son of Abraham**, all the preceding and intervening patriarchs being left out of that verse? In following out the marginal references we discover that it is because two great covenants have been made, the one with Abraham, and the other with David, which covenants are to be fulfilled in Christ the divine “Seed” or Son of whom they speak.

Son of David

Thus on the phrase, “the Son of David,” the reference takes us to **Acts 2:30**, where Peter tells us in his great Pentecostal sermon that God has sworn with an oath to David “that He would seat one of his descendants on his throne.” Thus, as the son of David, he will inherit David’s throne. From Acts 2:30, the reference takes us to **2 Samuel 7:12-13**, where we find

the covenant with David, containing the oath to which Peter refers. Then to **Psalms 132:11**, where the same oath is referred to in almost the exact words of Peter: “The Lord has sworn to David a truth from which He will not turn back: I will set on your throne one of your descendants.” Then to **Luke 1:32-33**, where also the angel Gabriel declares that Christ will obtain the throne of his father David, and that “of his kingdom there will be no end.” And now see how the light accumulates and grows brighter and still brighter, as we progress in our researches! For here the reference is to **Daniel 2:44 and 7:14, 27**, where we learn that when Christ obtains the throne of David, his kingdom will not be confined to the narrow strip of land over which David reigned, but will fill the *whole* earth; also that it will be an everlasting kingdom, and will be *under* the whole heaven, and therefore on earth, of course.

Then we are taken to **Obadiah 21**, and there told that the kingdom will be the *Lord’s*, that is, it will be the kingdom of God, spoken of in the gospel. From there we are referred to **Revelation 11:15**, which informs us that the kingdom will be manifested at the resurrection, under the seventh trumpet, which is “the *last* trumpet.” Then to **Revelation 19:6** where we learn that the Lord Jesus will not obtain the kingdoms of this world without opposition, for the vile kings of the earth and their armies will make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them, and bind Satan, and reign triumphantly with his risen saints in the blissful millennial state (Rev. 20).

Son of Abraham

And now, returning to our verse we take up the other phrase, “the Son of Abraham.” The reference here points to **Galatians 3:16**, which informs us that to Christ as the “Seed” or Son of Abraham, certain great promises have been made. And the reference there points to **Genesis 12:7**, where the promise reads, “To your seed I will give **this** land,” meaning the land of Canaan on this earth. And the reference here points to **Genesis 13:15 and 17:8**, where we discover that all the land of Canaan has been promised for an *everlasting* possession, to Abraham and his seed, that is, to Abraham and to Christ, as Paul explains it. Thus the argument is perfectly clear that as the Son of Abraham, the Lord Jesus will inherit the *land* of Canaan on this earth, for an everlasting or eternal possession; and as the son of David, he will inherit a glorious *throne* upon that land.

Now returning to **Galatians 3**, I find on verse **17** a reference to **Romans 4:13**, which gives us to understand that the full extent of the promise was equal to the promise of “*the world*” for, as we have shown, when the Son of David (and Son of God) comes in glory and takes possession of the throne of David, his

kingdom will fill the whole earth. Then in **Galatians 3:29** I find that all Christians, by virtue of their relationship to Christ, are also Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise made to him and his seed. And the reference on this verse takes us to **Romans 8:17**, which says that they are *joint heirs* with Christ.

Behold, then, how these two classes of testimony — the one concerning the Son of David, the other concerning the Son of Abraham — are like two crystal streams that, rising in the first verse of the New Testament, flow throughout the Scriptures, gathering volume from their tributary texts as they go, until they both end and blend

*In that bright Paradise restored
The blissful kingdom of the Lord*

Even in that kingdom which the Lord Jesus will establish on earth at His coming, and in which, through the atoning merits of the precious blood of Christ you may obtain endless happiness, if you will believe and obey the gospel of the kingdom. ✧

Aionios: The Word to Sharpen Our View of the Future

by Anthony Buzzard

If believers really understood what was at stake in being a Christian, I am sure they would find the resources to be radically different from the world. The trouble is, I think, that many do not grasp the awesomeness of their destiny as co-regents with the Messiah in the coming Kingdom of God. They cannot thrill to Paul's challenge that we should conduct ourselves in a way that is worthy of the staggering invitation we have been given to the Kingdom (Eph. 4:1).

Until the Kingdom comes into focus in people's spiritual vision, the situation is likely to remain unchanged. In this brief study I suggest that the foggy translation of a key Greek word keeps Bible readers in the dark about the future. It also helps to propagate the monstrous notion that God is going to torture the wicked forever and ever.

Quite simply, "eternal" in our Bibles is a mistranslation of the Greek word *aionios*, which means "pertaining to the coming age of the Kingdom of God." It is a semi-technical term to be applied to all the good (and threatening) things of the future. What the righteous are invited to inherit is "life in the coming age" or "the life of the coming age." By contrast the wicked are ushered into "punishment excluding them from the coming age." A step towards clarity was taken

by The Twentieth Century New Testament: A Translation into Modern English when they rendered "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46) as "aeonian punishment." The length of the punishment is not described. It is a penalty based on exclusion from the coming age.

"Eternal Life" Should Be "Life of the Age to Come"

The term "everlasting" or "eternal life" is a poor representation of its very Jewish original. The phrase *zoe aionios*, in most Bible translations "everlasting" or "eternal life," really means the Life of the Age to Come or the Life of the Coming Kingdom, which is the same thing. Our good friend, the late Dr. Nigel Turner, remarks in his excellent *Christian Words*: "It is imprecise to render 'aionios life' as 'eternal life.'"¹ Dr. Turner used a characteristic British understatement: "It is imprecise" to translate *aionios* as "eternal." It is in fact very un-Jewish to render the word as "everlasting" or "eternal." This is much too vague and helps to veil the whole idea of the future Kingdom of God on the earth in the Age to Come. It clouds and befogs the great cardinal virtue of Hope. It allows for all sorts of alien philosophy to invade the faith and gives support for life in heaven as a bodiless spirit, which is something Jesus said nothing about.

About Revelation 14:6, usually translated "eternal Gospel," Nigel Turner wrote, "The 'aionios Gospel' is not therefore in Christian language the 'everlasting Gospel'... Rather, it is the Gospel of, or concerning, the Kingdom-age (Rev. 14:6)."² More recently, N.T. Wright's *Kingdom New Testament* translation (2011) has correctly "the life of the age to come" in many verses. For example, "What should I do to inherit the life of the age to come?" (Matt. 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25).

In addition the rendering of *aionios* as "eternal" in Matthew 25:41 causes the average reader to think of an eternal punishment for the wicked, an idea which some evangelicals are thankfully giving up. A strong case can be made for the destruction of the wicked based on the fact that the fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah is also "eternal" (*aionios*), that is "having to do with the future age of the Kingdom" (Jude 7). The fire is not still burning. What Jude meant was that the ancient fire which destroyed those evil cities was of the same sort as that which will destroy the wicked in the future. Supernatural fire is what is meant, not eternal fire.

In my translation of the New Testament, I have found that translating *aionios*, wherever it appears, as "of the age to come" or "belonging to the coming age" throws a flood of light on the text and saves us from much misinterpretation. How clear it is, for example,

¹ Nigel Turner, *Christian Words*, 1980, p. 452.

² *Ibid.*, p. 456.

that in 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul has in mind the future resurrection body of the believer which we “have,” i.e. we have it as something God has prepared for us. And it is *aionios*, a body fit for the coming age of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is a body which enables us to maintain our identity. It will be a body animated by spirit and never subject to death.

The Battle over *aionios*

In 1857 Charles Kingsley helped to dispel the darkness with which Platonism had shrouded the truth of Scripture in regard to the future. He declared that the word *aion* (age) “never is used in Scripture or anywhere else in the sense of endlessness (vulgarly called eternity). It always meant, both in Scripture and out, a period of time...*Aionios* therefore means, and must mean, belonging to an epoch...*aionios kolasis* is the punishment allotted to that epoch” (not everlasting punishment!).³

Tradition rose to oppose this truth when Dr. Pusey preached a sermon at Oxford to promote the idea of the everlasting punishment of sinners. He argued that the word *aionios* in classical Greek *does* mean endlessness. But classical Greek is a poor measure of the Hebrew-oriented New Testament language.

In 1877 Dr. Samuel Cox replied by pointing out that the word *aionios* “is saturated through and through with the thought and element of time. The adjective *aionios* must derive the whole of its meaning from the [noun] *aion* from which it is derived. In the NT the word is used in connection with the Jewish doctrine of the aeons [ages]. Instead of affirming that time shall be no more when men pass out of this present order and age, the New Testament speaks of ‘ages to come’ as well as ages that are past. In the past the Patriarchal age, the Mosaic age; in the future ‘the age of the Messiah’ or ‘the age to come.’”⁴

No wonder then that Paul spoke of God’s “plan for the ages” (Eph. 3:11). *Aionios* refers to the great age to come and God’s great purpose for that age.

In 1878 Canon Farrar added the weight of his scholarship to the emerging light of truth by asserting that “It has been so ably proved by so many writers that there is no authority whatever for rendering [*aionios*] as ‘everlasting.’”⁵ Professor E.H. Plumptre agreed: “The whole history of the word [*aionios*] shows that it cannot, as a word, denote endlessness.”⁶

Nevertheless the public were continuing to read in their inadequate translations that Jesus will usher the

wicked into “eternal punishment” (Matt. 25:46). In this way the fog of Platonism continued to interfere with the inspired words of Scripture. The latter could not be heard clearly as long as the confusion of Greek philosophical concepts jam the pure Hebrew signals of Scripture.

The Bible vs. Plato

Interestingly, in the vocabulary of Plato the word *aion* applies to things belonging to the world of eternal ideas. Platonically minded writers and thinkers, then, will use *aionios* in the transcendent and timeless sense in which Plato used it. It is that meaning which has been foisted on our translations, as through Platonic metaphysics is the basis of what the prophets and Jesus said about the future. Little wonder, then, that people expect souls to enter at death the eternal, timeless heavenly realm. But nobody could have got that impression from the Bible if *aionios* had been allowed to retain its Hebraic association with God’s plan for the ages.

As George Ladd wrote, “We are not to think of eternity as the Greeks did, as something other than time...In Hellenism people longed for release from the cycle of time in a timeless world beyond, but in biblical thought time is the sphere of existence both now and in the future. The impression given by the KJV at Revelation 10:6, ‘there should be time no longer’ is corrected in the RSV, ‘there should be no more delay.’”⁷

Aionios in Daniel

In the LXX *aionios* occurs over 160 times. One of these texts is of paramount interest to us: **Daniel 12:2** where it describes the resurrection life of those who after the tribulation emerge from their sleep in the dust of the ground. Here *aionios* describes *zoe* — life — and it was this famous phrase which was so often on Jesus’ lips: “the life of the age to come.” It appears 40 times in the NT, along with other phrases believed by Jesus and drawn from Daniel — “Son of Man” and “Kingdom of Heaven.” Daniel provided Jesus with a storehouse of phrases and ideas, all of which have been tragically distorted or ignored by Platonically oriented theology.

In the LXX of Daniel *aionios* appears 7 times and refers to:

- God’s Kingdom (4:3)
- God’s authority or rule (4:34)

³ Charles Kingsley: *His Letters and Memoirs of His Life*, Vol. 1, p. 307.

⁴ Henry Major, “Aionios: Its Use and Meaning Especially in the New Testament,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, Oct. 1916, p. 8.

⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷ George Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1993, p. 44.

- The authority given to the Son of Man (7:14)
- The Kingdom given to the saints (7:27)
- The righteousness to be brought in after the end of the 70 “sevens” (9:24)
- The life of the age to come and the shame of the age to come (12:2)

As Vincent Taylor writes in his commentary on Mark, “*Zoe aionios*...appears first in Daniel 12:2 in connection with the idea of the resurrection of the dead...In origin the conception is eschatological: *Zoe aionios* is life in ‘the coming age’...No mere equivalent of immortality, it is a gift which a man receives from God in the resurrection.”⁸

Hastings Rashdall corroborates this definition of the word *aionios*: “Its fundamental meaning in the Gospels would seem to be ‘belonging to the aeon, the age’ that is to say, the coming age, the Messianic age. It certainly does not mean ‘everlasting,’ though sometimes no doubt it is applied to things which are everlasting.”⁹ ✧

Spacesuit Christology Is this Jesus truly human?

“We must examine the manner in which Athanasius envisages the Incarnation as taking place: The *Logos* takes to himself a body as an instrument, and within this body he operates as he chooses, permitting the body to endure normal human experiences, but **himself unaffected by these experiences**...We can properly describe this doctrine as a ‘**Space-suit Christology**.’ Just as the astronaut, in order to operate in a part of the universe where there is no air and where he has to experience weightlessness, puts on an elaborate space-suit which enables him to live and act in this new, unfamiliar environment, **so the *Logos* put on a body which enabled him to behave as a human being among human beings**. But his relation to this body is **no closer than that of an astronaut to his space-suit**.”

— R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 2005, p. 447

Comments

• “I hold your knowledge of the Scriptures in high regard. I had emailed you about 4 years ago about my exit from the Jehovah’s Witnesses. I shared with you about my ‘waking up.’ It happened when I was at the memorial and they were reading the scriptures about drinking the wine and eating the bread and how this

means everlasting life. As JW tradition has it, if you are not a part of the 144,000 you just pass the bread and wine. I remember feeling uneasy about this practice because I want everlasting life. I cannot find a Scripture that would indicate that we should pass around the emblems without drinking and eating. Could you feature more videos for Jehovah’s Witnesses who are PIMO (Physically In, Mentally Out), an expression for when they no longer believe in the organization but are held captive due to their families. I didn’t know what was the matter with me until I spent hours watching your videos over the years and asking for Holy Spirit to guide me through the Scriptures. Thank you so much for putting your energy into this work.” — *Email*

• “Always very interesting, edifying, thought-provoking, eye-opening, insightful perspectives of yours and others in *Focus on the Kingdom*, and much more needed to be made more accessible to many gullible, Scripturally illiterate, church-going people. We do not want to be just swallowing everything coming from the mouths and pulpits of most of today’s preachers, even beloved reformers of past generations who erred grossly Biblically and went astray from the heart of the Gospel of the kingdom and the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ. I am most grateful to you and all contributors to your *Focus on the Kingdom* for graciously providing this and making it available to me and many others in our campus communities of both the University of Ibadan Nigeria and the Polytechnic Ibadan. I regularly share with both interested students, staff and others within the vicinity of these two higher education institutions.” — *Nigeria*

• “I can never thank you enough for the material on the truth of the Gospel of God. God said He would have His scribes, and you and your wife (and others) have given me riches beyond anything I could imagine! I don’t know how many times I read the Bible but never saw what was always right in front of me. God opens physical eyes and spiritual eyes also. His only interest is that you know His truth! Ten years ago I turned my back on religion and asked God to show me His truth. It’s amazing how when I share what God has shown me through the Messiah Jesus, many people I’ve known for years can’t see it and don’t want to.” — *South Carolina*

• “I especially enjoyed the March issue of *Focus on the Kingdom*. I find it baffling that some are denying the millennium or saying it is now here?!” — *Minnesota*

• “I’m reading the book *The Gospel of the Kingdom* by Wiley Jones. It seems to me an extraordinary book, quite up to date in spite of having been originally published in 1879.” — *Chile*

⁸ Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 1952, p. 426.

⁹ Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, 1919, p. 12.