

MSB253

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Founder - David R. Hetteema, Director

THE EONS OF THE EONS

By John C. Ribbens

Beyond all shadow of a doubt, the most elusive term in Scripture is that concerned with the meaning of the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aion*. For centuries past men have claimed that the meaning of the Greek word *aion* signifies "an indefinite, long period of time" or "an age." With this definition theologians have made one of the worst blunders that is possible to conceive. They have stretched the meaning into such terms as "forever," "evermore," "eternal," and "everlasting." These words, although found in most Bibles, are void of any profound meaning. In fact, there is no word in all the original manuscripts that conveys the idea of "everlasting" or "eternal" in the sense of time. Neither is there any word that can accurately and consistently be translated to mean "endless time."

It has become my deep conviction that the principle meaning of the word *aion* (eon) is primarily related to the nature of "God absolute." Only a Spirit-filled understanding of the word *aion* and its companion terms *aionos* and *aionon* can provide the key to unlocking the meaning of God's word. These words do not only reveal the character of God's past dealings with mankind, but also the present day of grace and the future times which lie ahead for mankind. Only as men begin to understand the Scriptural teaching of the *aion* will they be able to enter into the vast treasures of wisdom and knowledge that God has been pleased to conceal within His word. Isaiah declared, **Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor hath taught Him? with whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?** (Isaiah 40: 13-14).

Lacking a clear and concise knowledge of the meaning of this word, the Bible will forever remain an enigma. Only as men seek diligently to understand what the Scriptures teach concerning the eons, in which God will flow out to mankind, will they enjoy the satisfying realization of His love which transcends all knowledge. The late Otis Q. Sellers made the discovery that the essential idea contained in the Hebrew word *olam* and the equivalent Greek word *aion* is that which flows. This is a revelation which concerns God's character; something He has revealed about Himself which can be called "the truth of the everflowing God." This concept is clearly established in such passages which speak of God's promise to bring Israel into a land "flowing with milk and honey". The enormity of this truth can be seen by an examination of some key passages. The Psalmist David spoke of a time when men will "put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings and cause them to drink of Thy pleasures" (Psa. 36:7-9). Consider Amos 5:24 which provides a picture of God's government in operation. "But let (cause) judgment to run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." These judgments of God flowing down to mankind will radically transform life on earth.

As Sellers once stated, "One of the most important uses of *olam* and its companion word *aion* in the Bible is a name or descriptive title for that condition of things which will be manifested on this earth when God's government, the Kingdom of God, becomes a reality." This majestic period of time has been designated in Scripture by the familiar term "forever."

However, the importance of this truth has been obscured by the concept of "forever." The word "forever," which in reality has no meaning, is used in our English Bibles. This word is found twelve times in the Gospel of John. It is a translation of the Greek phrase *eis ton aiona*, which, when properly translated signifies "in relation to the eon." This is the eon, which God has set in the heart of every man (Eccl. 3: 11). In each of these twelve occurrences something of great importance has been said as it relates to the coming Kingdom of God. Only as we become familiar with these individual passages, which describe the character of divine government, can we gain further insight into the blessings of the eon.

In the first occurrence of this term, John 4:13-14, we observe the Lord speaking to the woman at Jacob's well and saying, **Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall**

be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The words "shall never" are a poor translation, since the passage is the negative phrase *me eis ton aiona* (not in relation to the eon). In this passage Jesus spoke of "water" in a symbolic sense. The "water" upon which men so strongly depend, in a literal sense, will never fully satisfy a man's thirst. Whereas **"that water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up in relation to the eon (*eis ton aiona*)."** The word translated "springing up" has reference to an artesian well in which water is constantly gushing forth. The primary characteristic of eonian life is that it (the outflow of God) provides everything essential to man's existence. This same truth is expressed in John 6:51 where Jesus made the profound declaration, **I am the living bread which came out of heaven** (a veiled reference to God Himself), **if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever (*eis ton aiona*).** In other words, he will live upon the earth during eonian times or with respect to the eon.

Understand that the crucial needs which men possess and relate to their survival include water and bread, without which men could not long expect to live. Men privileged to live upon the earth during Eonian Times will experience God's perfect provision for every conceivable need. These include spiritual development as well as their physical needs. Throughout the Acts Period the Kingdom of God was present in the earth, comparable to the blade and ear stages of growing grain (Christ's parable in Mark 4:28).

This became manifest in the lives of thousands (*myriads*--tens of thousands, Acts 21:20) of men on whom God lavished His Spirit. As the result of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which began on the day of Pentecost, a vast number of men appeared on the scene who displayed spectacular powers. These were men upon whom God conferred the gifts of the spirit, . . . **For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues** (many languages); **to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will** (1 Cor. 12:5-11). No man having received the gift of the spirit could claim that it originated within himself. Consider the case of the Apostle Peter in Acts 3 in which he displayed the supernatural gift of healing.

There we read of **a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms (Acts 3:2-3). Upon seeing the plight of this man Peter said to him, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. . . And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God (Acts 3:6-8).**

We need to understand that Peter and the Acts Period believers became recipients of the Spirit and power of God. In this capacity these men, like Philip who had the ability to speak the truth of God and perform miracles, (Acts 8:5-8) became "eons." There are no such men living today through whom such miracles are being performed. My studies of the use that the Bible makes of the word *aion* have led me to conclude that this powerful term cannot only be applied to God, or the character of Eonian Times, but also to a unique company of men called "believers in Christ." This concept must not be easily dismissed. Once God's Kingdom becomes a reality, a vast company of men will appear on the earth, including many who have died but since have been resurrected from the dead, who will serve God as "flowing eons." It is my belief that every prophet, judge, counselor or priest, including men like Moses, Joshua, David, Joel and Jeremiah, who served God in ancient times became "eons," in and through whom God saw fit to "flow out" (with wisdom and instruction) to Israel and the nations as "living eons." These men were not merely God's spokesmen, but became men in and through whom God saw fit to flow out to Israel and the nations. David's words contained in the book of Psalms are an example of God "flowing out" to all mankind.

In the book of Revelation we find no less than thirteen occurrences of the Greek phrase *eis tous aionas*, translated "forever and ever." This Greek phrase should read "unto the eons of the eons." It appears in Revelation 11:15 where John, the author of this book, declared, . . . **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign with respect to the eons of the eons.** There is no man living today who can properly be called "an eon." This is because of the present silence of God. No man living today can claim divine authorization with respect to making God known to men.

Once God assumes the reigns of government every man qualified to be a member of His *ekklesia* will serve God, either in a capacity of government, or as an expression of the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10). Every man so designated by God will function as an "outflowing eon." Our ability to serve God in that capacity is not based on our qualifications, but upon the gift of grace. Our future destiny is dramatically linked to Eonian Times during which God will instruct men with respect to His judgments.

Following some 500 years of being taught by God, the believers will enter into the 1000-year reign of Christ. This is characterized by the *apokalupsin* or the "unveiling of Jesus Christ." As God continues to flow out during this particular time, His out-positioned ones will participate in the outflowings of God. In this capacity we will become part of "the eons of the eons," and will glorify God who will be exalted in all the earth.

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