

BIBLICAL SUBJECT AND STRUCTURE

Genesis... John...

EACH TESTAMENT BEGINS AND CONTINUES THE SAME WAY

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:9, 10).

“In the beginning God created the heaven [‘heavens’] and the earth...” (Gen. 1:1ff).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...” (John 1:1-3ff).

In Genesis, beginning Scripture, the first thirty-four verses (1:1-2:3) relate the complete story in initial, skeletal form, showing the end (2:1-3) from the beginning (1:1).

In John’s gospel, which should begin the New Testament, *NOT* Matthew’s gospel, the first sixty-two verses (1:1-2:11) again relate the complete story in initial, skeletal form, showing the end (2:1-11) from the beginning (1:1-3).

Both Genesis and John — showing the end from the beginning — deal with *creation* (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3), *a ruin of the creation* (Gen. 1:2a; John 1:4, 5), *six days of restorative work* (Gen. 1:2b-25; John 1:6-2:1), followed by *a seventh day of rest* (Gen. 2:1-3; John 2:1-11).

A skeletal framework of events is set forth at the beginning of Genesis, *showing the subject matter of the Old Testament*; and the same thing is seen at the beginning of John, showing *the continuing subject matter of the New Testament*.

The whole of Scripture has been established *in a septenary structure of this nature, clearly shown at the beginning of each Testament* (Gen. 1:1-2:3; John 1:29, 35, 43; 2:1).

Beginning Genesis, God is seen working six days to restore a ruined material creation, with man created at the conclusion of God's work on the sixth day, created to rule the restored creation (the man and woman together).

THEN, God rested the seventh day.

BUT, Satan brought about man's fall, with a ruined condition again befalling the restored creation (cursed).

Thus, man, following the fall, *NOT ONLY* found himself disqualified to rule the earth *BUT* the creation itself *could NOT* be ruled by man in its resulting cursed condition.

Thus, *NOT ONLY* did man have to be redeemed *BUT* the creation (once again) as well.

Beginning John's gospel, the entire matter is again seen.

God is again seen working six days to restore a ruined creation, *BUT this time it is ruined man being restored (a ruined creation), with a view to the seventh day once again.*

(The pattern concerning how God restores a ruined creation, along with that which follows [the reason, purpose for the restoration], was *UNCHANGEBLY SET in a PERFECT MANNER in God's restoration of the ruined material creation in the opening verses of Genesis [1:2b-25].*

Thus, EXACTLY the same pattern can ONLY be followed — it MUST be followed — in man's restoration.

God, relative to ruined man, would work six days restoring man, with a view to a seventh-day rest. And, as clearly seen *in BOTH Genesis and John, this seventh-day rest would be the time when man would hold the scepter and rule a restored earth.*

And God gave *the Sabbath* to Israel as a "sign," referencing Gen. 1:2b-2:3, *in order to keep His complete redemptive plans and purposes ever before His people* [Ex. 31:12-17; cf. Ex. 20:8-11].

Then, note Heb. 4:1-9 relative to Christians.)

THEN, in Rev. 5-19, at the end of God's six days of work restoring man, He is seen restoring the earth once again, with a view to restored man ruling the restored material creation, in complete keeping with the reason/purpose for man's creation in the beginning, in Gen. 1:26-28.

And *ALL* of this comes together on the seventh day, which is the direction toward which *ALL* Scripture moves.

(For information on the importance and place of John's gospel in the N.T., refer to the first five chapters in the author's book, *Signs in John's Gospel*; also see Chapter V in the author's book, *The Acts Period*, along with the foreword and introduction in the author's book, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles*.)

For information on the restoration of the earth, both in Gen. 1 [past] and Rev. 5 [future], refer to Part II ["In the Loins of Abraham"] in the author's article, "Salvation Is of the Jews.")

From the Beginning to the End From the End to the Beginning

It was ALL set forth at the beginning, the end seen from the beginning. And this is easy to see from the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis or the opening sixty-two verses of John.

Note that this *CANNOT* be seen *UNLESS* a person correctly understands how each Testament opens, revealing the structure and following content of each.

(For example, this *CANNOT* be seen in the teaching that Genesis chapter one has to do with six days of creation.

NOR can it be seen in the teaching that Gen. 1:1 has to do with the beginning of the restoration of a prior [unseen] ruined creation [a view held by many, though less widely taught than the former].

The first of the two preceding views [creation only], *has a beginning, BUT NO end [NO end to show the end from the beginning].*

The second of the two views [restoration only] *has an end BUT NO beginning* [disallowing the end to be seen from the beginning, for *NO* beginning exists].

And *NOTHING* really needs to be said about the opening verses in John's gospel in the preceding respect, for matters have been taken awry preceding John, in Genesis.)

Knowing things about the preceding — how God has structured His Word, showing the end from the beginning — is simply one way that the correct interpretation of the opening verses in both Genesis and John can unquestionably be correctly ascertained and understood.

There are other ways, *mainly the way that the WHOLE of subsequent Scripture is structured and the direction toward which ALL things move.*

As well, the complete gospel message (salvation past, present, and future) *is seen ONLY in the correct view of Gen. 1:1-2:3, or in John 1:1-2:11.* And with these opening verses in both Genesis and John either little understood or misunderstood throughout Christendom, is it any wonder that the salvation message itself is, as well, little understood or misunderstood today?

(Note that the complete salvation message has its basis in the septenary structure opening Genesis [opening the O.T.], set forth again opening John [opening the N.T.].

Refer to the author's article, "Salvation in the O.T., N.T.")

Time, or Eternity?

As previously seen, the Bible deals *with "time,"* six and seven days, foreshadowing six and seven thousand years. Scripture has very little to say about that which occurred before this time, and Scripture has very little to say about that which will occur after this time.

God has revealed *ONLY* enough to allow man to see and understand the place which His dealings with man and the earth during a septenary period of time (7,000 years) occupy in relation to revealed events both preceding and following this time.

Contrary to common belief, Scripture deals sparingly with “eternity.” Rather, as seen, Scripture deals with “time,” seven thousand years of time, which is made quite clear at the beginning of each Testament.

A structured seven-thousand-year period permeates the whole of Scripture, NOT the eternal ages beyond.

Viewing the whole of Scripture with respect to foundations and building on the foundations (*which is the ONLY correct way to view matters and study Scripture*), the superstructure resting on the foundation would have Gen. 2:4ff resting on Gen. 1:1-2:3, or John 2:12ff resting on John 1:1-2:11 (*the SAME superstructure resting on the SAME foundation, seen from DIFFERENT perspectives*).

And “time” in the superstructure *MUST* remain in complete keeping with “time” in the foundation, *among ALL other things*. Since the foundation deals with events during a revealed period of “time” (seven days, 7,000 years), so *MUST the superstructure*.

In other words, the whole of Scripture is about that set forth in a septenary arrangement of events beginning both Testaments.

There is simply NO way that matters could be seen and understood after ANY other fashion.

And, other than a limited number of widely scattered references to events during “time” preceding and beyond the seven thousand years (“time” beyond the 7,000 years is dealt with in the next section [including Rev. 21, 22, closing Scripture]), *EVERYTHING* in the superstructure remains in complete keeping *with EVERYTHING* in the foundation.

(And the widely scattered references to events during “time” either preceding or following the 7, 000 years, along with Rev. 21, 22, are, as previously stated, undoubtedly given so that man can place and better understand revealed events during the 7,000 years in their proper perspective.)

Thus, the complete seven days, the complete seven thousand years, are seen beginning both Testaments, with God revealing the end from the beginning each place.

Olam, Aion, Aionios

Since the whole of Scripture in both Testaments deals with events during “time” (six and seven thousand years of time [6,000 years of restorative work, followed by a 1,000-year day of rest]) *WHY* does practically the whole of Christendom read and see Scripture dealing with events during “time” (present) in relation to “eternity” (future)?

And, in a respect, that is a rather easy question to answer, though, at the same time, it is a very difficult question to deal with.

The simple answer is threefold:

1) Problems with the English translation, mainly with three words — *olam* (O.T.) *aion*, *aionios* (N.T.).

2) How individuals understand Gen. 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-2:11 and the relationship these sections have to all subsequent Scripture.

3) The resulting central message *seen throughout ALL Scripture*.

Olam is the main Hebrew word translated “eternal” throughout the Old Testament, and *aion* or *aionios* (the adjective form of *aion*) are the two Greek words translated “eternal” throughout the New Testament.

Question: *HOW* can the superstructure deal with “eternity” when the foundation deals *ONLY* with “time,” limited to seven thousand years?

And the answer is quite simple:

It CAN'T!

The foundation, so to speak, *is the SET standard*. And “time” in the superstructure *MUST remain in COMPLETE keeping with “time” in the foundation, the SET standard*.

The matter is similar to the relationship between the timepiece in Greenwich and the celestial chronometer.

The timepiece in Greenwich *is ALWAYS set by the unchangeable, celestial chronometer, NEVER the other way around*.

And, in like manner, that which follows Gen. 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-2:11 *MUST ALWAYS remain in complete accord with that SET in these foundational passages, the SET, unchangeable standard*.

1) No Word for “Eternal”

Something little understood is the fact that *NEITHER* the Hebrew text of the Old Testament *NOR* the Greek text of the New Testament has a word for “eternal.”

Olam in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is the main word translated “eternal.” This word has to do, *NOT* with “eternity,” *BUT* with “a long period of time,” which would be “time” related to the subject at hand.

And though the word is used of God numerous times, it would still relate, first and foremost, to time in the foundational structure. True, God transcends “time,” *BUT*, it would also be true that Scripture deals with events during “time,” *NOT* during “eternity.”

Aion and *aionios* in the Greek text of the New Testament are associated with “time” the same way that *olam* is associated with “time” in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

(For a comprehensive understanding of the way *aion* and *aionios* are used in the Greek text of the New Testament, refer to the article, “Aion, Aionios,” on the author’s web site.

The contents of this article were taken from Marvin R. Vincent’s *Word Studies in the New Testament* [a widely recognized four-volume Greek word study, edited over one hundred years ago, still a standard work today].)

The Greek philosophers, preceding the writing of the New Testament, used *aion* to reference “time,” *NOT* “eternity,” with *aionios* used in their later writings after the same fashion.

And this is the type usage and understanding of these two words that continued through the time that the New Testament was written.

And, as well, this would be in complete keeping with that seen in the foundational material beginning each Testament. Understanding the use of *olam*, *aion*, or *aionios* as “eternal” — at any point from Moses to John — would *NOT ONLY* be out of line with this foundational material *BUT ALSO* with an understanding of *HOW* these words were understood and used at the time Scripture was written.

Thus, the understanding and use of *olam* throughout the approximately one-thousand-year period during which the Old Testament was written (abt. 1,400 to 400 B.C.) and of *aion* and *aionios* during the first century when the New Testament was written (during and shortly beyond the Acts period) would be in complete keeping with the thought of “time,” *NOT* “eternity,” as set forth in the foundational data beginning both Testaments.

In short, *it would be IMPOSSIBLE* to understand any one of these three words as “eternal” throughout this time and, at the same time, *remain in COMPLETE KEEPING with the foundational material.*

And *exactly* when and how *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* subsequently came to be understood as “eternal,” is, in reality, a moot

point. The foundation (seen beginning both Genesis and John) simply will *NOT* permit the words to reference “eternity”: *NOR* will the use and understanding of these words throughout the period extending from Moses to John permit such.

(This departure, misusing these words, resulting in that which exists today, is often traced to Jerome’s particular choice and use of Latin words to translate *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* in his *Latin Vulgate* [400 A.D.], a translation which became somewhat of a standard reference work for later translations.

However, again, that is neither here nor there. The foundation has been ignored, an understanding of the words has, accordingly, changed over the centuries, and Christians are left with the results today [existing translations, reflecting the way that the words have come to be understood, *NOT* *were understood*, with far-reaching, negative ramifications.]

2) Expressing “Eternal” in Scripture

Aion, as it is used in the Greek New Testament, often references “an age” (*ref.* the author’s article, “Ages and Dispensations”).

We derive our English word “aeon,” or “eon.” from *aion*. And, when the text does project matters out beyond the seven days, the seven thousand years, there is a double use of *aion*, or *aion* is used in a plural form (refer to the evident reason for this earlier in the article).

On the double use of *aion*, note verses such as Rev. 1:6; 4:9; 5:14, where the words, “forever and ever,” appear in the English text (KJV). These words are a translation of a double use of *aion*, with both words plural and articular. The more literal translation would be “the ages of the ages,” referencing the endless ages of eternity.

On the plural form of *aion*, note verses such as Luke 1:33 and Heb. 13:8. The plural form should literally be translated “ages,” referencing endless time, the endless ages of eternity.

And a similar double use of *olam* appears in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament (e.g., Ps. 103:17; Dan. 7:18).

3) A Question

An interesting question about the preceding, set forth by more than one Greek scholar from past years has to do with *HOW* to translate the double use, or particularly the plural, of *aion* *IF* the singular form is to be translated and understood as “eternal.”

Or, a related question could be asked as well. *WHY* should there even be a double use or plural of this word *IF* the singular is all-encompassing in relation to “time”?

BUT, all of that is neither here nor there anyway, for the word doesn’t mean “eternal,” evident from the foundation upon which Scripture rests (having to do with “time,” *NOT* with “eternity”) and its use at the time Scripture was written.

Age-Lasting and/or Eternal Salvation

As seen in this article, *SALVATION* in Scripture *has to do, FIRST and FOREMOST, with the seventh day, the earth’s coming Sabbath, the Messianic Era, set forth in the septenary foundation beginning Scripture. It would have to, for that seen in the subsequently revealed superstructure MUST remain in complete keeping with that first seen in the previously revealed foundation.*

Matters concerning regal power and authority over this earth *MUST* be dealt with *FIRST. The rights to and exercise of this regal power* are what Scripture is about, quite evident in both the foundation and the superstructure.

Scripture is simply *NOT* about the ages beyond the Messianic Era (*NOT* about eternity), though enough has been revealed to show that man will continue in a regal capacity during these ages (note particularly Rev. 21, 22).

And THIS continued regal activity will have to do with a rule from the new earth, evidently throughout the universe.

The Kingdom, Seen in... Age(s) Past, Man's Day, the Lord's Day, Ages Future

There would be one or more ages in the past, preceding the restoration of the earth and man's creation. We're not told.

Man's Day, lasting six days, 6,000 years, comprises the subsequent age.

The Lord's Day, lasting one day, 1,000 years, will comprise the age following Man's Day.

And, following the end of the Lord's Day, the end of the seven days, the end of the 7,000 years, a new age will begin, with an evident endless array of ages following.

As shown in this article, Scripture, beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation, is about God's work with man, during *one age* (Man's 6,000-year Day), with a view to *a subsequent age* (the Lord's 1,000-year Day), *NOT* about God's work with man relative to the eternal ages beyond; and *the WHOLE of the matter* is in relation to *a kingdom*.

EVERYTHING moves toward the Lord's Day and a kingdom realized in that day, NOT toward the eternal ages beyond.

The WHOLE of Scripture has to do with what some have termed "the angelic conflict," carrying the matter through to completion. And that has to do with Satan and his angels ultimately being put down, with Christ and His co-heirs THEN taking the kingdom and reigning for 1,000 years, UNTIL that seen in I Cor. 15:24, 25 has been brought to pass:

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

ONLY THEN, can the ages beyond come into view, referenced briefly at the end of Scripture in Rev. 21, 22.

The Goal

The goal toward which *ALL things* in Scripture move, as previously seen, *is set forth at the beginning of each Testament.*

But note *that goal* as seen in three passages of Scripture, extending from Calvary to 2,000 years later when *the goal* is realized — the first having to do with the Son's outlook on matters as He paid redemption's price at Calvary, the second having to do with both the Father and Son's outlook from heaven today, and the third when *the goal* has been realized.

1) *The Son's Outlook at Calvary*

"...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2b).

Christ, enduring the sufferings of Calvary, looked ahead to "the joy that was set before him," considering "the shame" of little consequence compared to "the joy" (thought set forth by the Greek word translated "despising").

"The joy" *can ONLY* have to do with events of the coming seventh day, the coming Lord's Day, the Messianic Era (compare the companion parables of the talents and pounds in Matt. 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27, with the word "joy" used this way in Matt. 25[vv. 21, 23, using the same word in the Greek text as used in Heb. 12:2; cf. Eccl. 2:26]).

2) *The Father and Son's Outlook Today*

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Ps. 110:1, 2; cf. Acts 7:55, 56).

Little needs to be said. The preceding is quite self-explanatory, without comment.

3) *That Toward Which All Scripture Moves Realized*

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13, 14).

”And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15, ASV).

Again, little needs to be said. The preceding companion passages are quite self-explanatory.

The kingdom of this world under Satan will have been completely destroyed (Dan. 2, 7), and the Father will have given the kingdom to His Son.

And the Son’s reign (“forever and ever”) will extend throughout the last eon of the present earth and all the eons of eternity on the new earth.

Available Material, a Suggestion

There are several English translations — all edited well over one hundred years ago — which render *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* in a manner other than “eternal.”

Three versions of this nature, covering both the Old and New Testaments, are readily available today:

Young’s Literal Translation

Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible

Concordant Literal Version

All three of these versions translate *Olam* (O.T.) and *aion*,

aiōnios (N.T.) either the same way or in a very similar fashion — “age,” “age-during,” “age-abiding,” “eon,” or “eonian.”

Then there is *The Emphatic Diaglott* — a Greek interlinear (N.T.) — translating *aion* and *aiōnios* as “age” and “age-lasting” in the interlinear part.

Then, in an English side column translation, case forms of *aion* and *aiōnios* are used in the text, untranslated.

(*The Emphatic Diaglott* was registered by the U.S. Congress in 1864, with work completed during the next several decades on the other three versions mentioned.)

And the preceding type translation work can easily be done when reading any English version. Simply understand all appearances of “eternal” in the English text as “age” or “age-lasting” (from the Hebrew and Greek texts) — referring to “time” during the 7,000 years dealt with by Scripture (during both the present age and the coming age, though mainly during the coming age (during the Lord’s 1,000-year Day).

You will be far more accurate both textually and contextually if you see and understand English translations in the preceding manner.

This is *NOT* to undermine in any way the thought of man’s presently possessed salvation being “eternal.” Rather, it is simply remaining with the way Scripture handles the matter — making a sharp distinction between two ages in connection with the present earth (Man’s 6,000-year Day, and the Lord’s 1,000-year Day) and the endless array of ages in connection with the new earth.

Scripture is about the former, NOT the latter. And man, studying Scripture, SHOULD deal with and remain within the confines of the subject matter in Scripture, which deals centrally with man in relation to the coming 1,000-year Lord’s Day, NOT in relation to the eternal ages beyond.