

Rewards are Eternal Supplemental Studies

6/9/2015

Introduction

Since the release of my book, *Rewards are Eternal* (RAE), some readers have posed further inquiries that will be addressed in this supplemental study. The eternal-reward position taken in this study is offered in contradistinction to those kingdom teachers who limit rewards to the 1000 years of the millennial kingdom. Some of the principle arguments used by age-lasting advocates to limit rewards to 1000 years addressed in the present study include the following: (1) the singular form of *aion* limits rewards to the millennial age; (2) the creation-week model limits rewards to the seventh day; (3) the original purpose of creation must be realized in which all redeemed humanity will rule; (4) all forms of death are abolished at the end of the millennial kingdom, so misthological death, and thus rewards, must cease to exist.

Original Scope of Rulership

The original intention of rulership pertaining to humanity was laid out in Gen 1:26-28. Some of those advocating an age-long limitation on misthological rulership have appealed to this passage in defense of their position. This line of argumentation goes something like this: “Since the *them* in Gen 1:26 refers to all created humanity, all redeemed humanity must rule in eternity future.” However, when taken in its context, this argument falls apart immediately:

²⁶ Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let **them rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ²⁷ And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created **them**. ²⁸ And God blessed **them**; and God said to **them**, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and **rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

This argument, if taken to its logical conclusion, would not only lead to universalism but to eternal sex on the part of all humanity. The original intent of creation was for all humanity to share in this rulership. If this original intent must be realized in its full scope, then all humanity, not just redeemed humanity, must be able to rule. Obviously, this argument leads to soteriological universalism so that all humanity is saved in the end. Since those advocating an age-long limitation on rewards do not espouse soteriological universalism, they should abandon this fallacious argument. Their argument, if accepted, would result in a form of universalism which they acknowledge to be false. Therefore, they should conclude that their argument is false. Their argument, in essence, proves too much. It proves that all created humanity, not merely redeemed humanity, would rule. Using this passage to advocate universal misthology leads to universal soteriology. Since the conclusion is false, the argument being employed in defense of that conclusion is false. This passage is not teaching universal misthology for all humanity.

Events subsequent to this decree modified the applicable scope of those who will qualify for rulership. This creational decree was made before the fall and thus before redemption was provided. This decree proceeds the fall but was modified in scope by the fall. Since its intention was modified subsequent to its original declaration by the fall, those imposing an age-long limitation are being inconsistent to insist that the scope must be the same as its original intention. Accordingly, it does not follow that just because Gen 1:26 refers to all *created* humanity, all *redeemed* humanity must rule in eternity future. Rather, only the redeemed have the potential to qualify for this rulership. But this rulership has been conditioned on faith and faithfulness subsequent to the fall. Indeed, the condition of faithfulness for rulership was made implicit even before the fall. In order to be able to rule in the Garden of Eden and eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve had to obey the warning not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Failing the test of faithfulness by eating of this forbidden fruit would bring about the death of their uncontested rulership.

Note also that the same *them* is extended throughout the passage: *Let them rule, be fruitful, and multiply*. The original intention was that there would have been no death, so that those ruling would have continued procreating throughout eternity. Death would not have severed the marriage bond. Procreation by the kingdom rulers would have continued eternally. Yet age-limiting advocates who want to stomp on the gas when it comes to insisting that this rulership applies to all those encompassed by the original decree want to put on the brakes when it comes to following through on the logical implications of their argument as it pertains to being fruitful and multiplying. Once again their argument proves too much. If their argument were valid, then one would be left to conclude that after the millennial age is over, conditions will revert to their original intention and these kingdom rulers will be multiplying and filling creation with

their offspring. To the contrary, however, Jesus said, “Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Lk 20:35). Those taking this age-lasting approach, if being logically consistent, would have to pull Jesus aside and say, “True, Lord, but after the 1000 years, they will marry and have children because the original mandate must be carried out!” Would Jesus not rebuke such a response?

Now, for reasons specified in *The Outer Darkness* (OD), it should be acknowledged that redeemed humanity will indeed continue to procreate in eternity. Yet this does not mean that all redeemed humanity will do so. Only those who enter the eternal state in physical bodies will continue to procreate. Since the sexual part of the passage does not apply to all redeemed humanity, the supposition that the regal aspect of the passage necessarily applies to all redeemed humanity is immediately met with objection.

Moreover, as demonstrated in OD, Eve was taken from Adam’s body to from a companion body to co-rule with him. Eve represents the Bride of Christ (i.e., faithful believers). Adam’s body represents the non-bridal believers (i.e., unfaithful). This perspective is shared also by those holding the age-limiting view. Typologically, *them* points to the faithful, not unfaithful, as ruling. Adam and his bride taken from his side were to rule together. His bride taken from his side represents the Bride of Christ, the faithful. Christ’s body, the church is to be **ruled over** by Christ as the head. But the church in general, comprising the unfaithful, are not pictured as ruling in the typological relationship. They are ruled over by Christ as their head. They do not co-rule with Christ. The church of the firstborn, in contrast to the church at large, is to **rule with** Christ as His consort queen. The Bride is taken out of Christ’s side (out of the body of believers at large) so that she might rule beside Him. Those holding the age-limiting position acknowledge this typological presentation to be true. So they are being untrue to their own typological analysis when they use this passage to claim that after an age Christ’s body co-rules with Him. Impossible! The church remains His body, ruled over by Him as the Head, throughout eternity. The Bride, taken from the church at large, comprises a separate body that co-rules with Him, necessarily throughout eternity because the Bride is not subject to misthological death.

Original Scope of Death

1Cor 15:22-26

Some of those advocating an age limitation on rewards have insisted that because death is defeated all results and forms of death must be eliminated. One passage pressed into service in support of this position is from 1Cor 15.

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, ²⁴ then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (1Cor 15:22-26)

Some age-limiting advocates would ask, “If death is not destroyed in relation to the *unfaithful*, then what death is destroyed?” Once again, this argument proves too much. If all forms of death are removed and its results overturned, then the second death would be eliminated at the conclusion of the millennial age as well. Universalists are left to have a field day with this passage in that case. They would turn right around and ask, “If death is not destroyed in relation to the *unbelievers*, then what death is destroyed? After all, how can death be abolished if the second death is still in effect?” Universalists would have all humanity taken out of the Lake of Fire and allowed into Heaven at the very time that the Bible states that unbelievers are cast into the Lake of Fire. Once again universalism in the field of misthology leads to universalism in the field of soteriology. The Bible is opposed to both forms of universalism and thus to those promoting such erroneous theology. The original, ideal intent was that none of humanity would experience death. This ideal intent, nonetheless, will not be realized on the part of all humanity. Basically, the death induced by Adam’s fall will be removed insofar as it pertains to redeemed humanity. From that point on no human being in the Lord’s kingdom will die physically. This standard dispensational answer suffices. To press this text beyond this normal dispensational perspective to make it mean that rewards cease is to run counter to the dispensational norm and biblical prudence. The forms of death that existed (1) naturally before the fall or (2) as a result of the Judgment Seat of Christ or (3) as a consequence of the Great White Throne Judgment are not removed.¹

From the immediate context of 1Cor 15 itself, one would think that it is unreasonable to pose that Paul is projecting

¹ For discussion of forms of death that existed before the fall and that still must exist in the eternal state, see RAE. Also, see discussion therein for the removal of death in Rev 21:4, another popular text used improperly to argue for an age-long limitation to death. For a video summation of key points, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6UJrL1sjqY>. My major book, *The Outer Darkness*, may be consulted for this text as well.

the end of rewards, as age-limiting advocates claim. In their mind, the end of death necessarily entails the end of misthological death and thus the end of misthological distinctions. Yet, within the heart of this very context, Paul associates obtaining immortal bodies with different degrees of glory:

³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. ⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the **glory** of the heavenly is one, and the **glory** of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one **glory** of the sun, and another **glory** of the moon, and another **glory** of the stars; for **star differs from star in glory**. (1Cor 15:39-41)

If the end of death means the end of rewards, then it means the end of degrees of glory, a very unlikely deduction from this very context. Paul not only states that there is a difference in the type of glory between terrestrial and celestial bodies but that there is difference in the degree of glory between celestial bodies. Misthological glory is, of course, a common NT theme. Differences in degree of glory will exist among believers. All believers will receive glorified bodies, but not all believers will receive co-glorified bodies.

All believers will have transformed, **glorified**, sinless bodies since they will all be with Christ in glory (Col 3:4; cp. Jn 17:24; 1Cor 15:43; Phil 3:21; 1Thess 3:13; 1Jn 3:2). However, only overcomers will have **co-glorified** bodies (Rom 8:17; 1Cor 15:41). This expression, *star differs from star in glory*, is well suited to convey the truth that *glorified believers differ from co-glorified believers in glory*. Paul certainly shared this perspective with the Corinthians: “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an *eternal* [aionios] weight of *glory* far beyond all comparison” (2Cor 4:17). Age-limiting advocates will object that the Greek text in 2Cor 4:17 does not necessarily mean *eternal* because the adjective form of *age* is used. Even if that point were conceded, however, the point still remains that a misthological differentiation in glory is entailed. Believers differ from believers in degree of glory just as stars differ from stars in glory. Confirmation that this distinction is eternal is found in the Corinthian context.

Paul affirms: “And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an *imperishable* [aphthartos]” (1Cor 9:25). Not all believers will receive this crown: “Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (1Cor 9:26-27). Believers differ from believers in glory. For how long? This same Greek word is used for our imperishable body: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised *imperishable* [aphthartos], and we shall be changed” (1Cor 15:52). All believers will have an imperishable body. For how long? Forever, of course! Our misthological crown is just as imperishable as our transformed bodies. Paul uses the same Greek word within the same epistle to confirm the imperishable and therefore eternal nature of both our transformed body and misthological crown. Since Paul is striving for an impressible crown that is limited to faithful believers, the reasonable inference is that the differentiation in glory between faithful versus unfaithful believers is eternal also.

This inference is confirmed by Peter’s similar perspective. Peter likewise uses this same word for *imperishable* to describe both our misthological inheritance and new birth, in the same chapter no less. He says that the goal for which God granted us new birth was so that we might “obtain an inheritance which is *imperishable* [aphthartos] and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven” (1Pet 1:4). If we pass the test, we will get this imperishable inheritance, which is associated with imperishable glory. The misthological results are “more precious than gold which is *perishable*, [and] even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1Pet 1:7). Perishable gold is contrasted with misthological glory. Therefore, this misthological glory is implicitly imperishable, being contrasted with perishable gold. How long do these imperishable rewards last? Peter goes on to say,

²³ For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but *imperishable* [aphthartos], that is, through the living and abiding word of God. ²⁴ For, “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord abides *forever* [aion].” And this is the word which was preached to you. (1Pet 1:23-25)

Our misthological inheritance and glory are just as imperishable as our new nature. They must last forever. Incidentally, the Greek word for *forever* used in this passage is a singular form of *aion*. For some age-limiting advocates to insist that the singular form of *aion* only lasts one age gives the faulty impression that the word of the Lord is perishable. To the contrary, according to Paul and Peter our reward is just as imperishable as our new nature and new body and God’s word.

1Cor 15:51-57

The conclusion of 1Cor 15 is typically considered to refer, at least inclusively, to the rapture within dispensational circles, and Chitwood rightly holds this perspective:

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But *when* [*hotan*] this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, *then* [*tote*] will come about the saying that is written, “**Death is swallowed up in victory.**” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the *victory* [*nikos*] through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Cor 15:51-57)

Chitwood rightly believes that this trumpet sound and imperishable transformation take place at the rapture: “The trumpet which will be heard when the Church is removed from the earth at the end of this dispensation, subsequently appearing in the presence of Christ to be judged, as revealed in chapters one through three (*cf.* I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16-5:9).”² But notice where that puts the swallowing up at death—at the point of the rapture: *then* is *when*. For an age-limiting advocate like Chitwood to argue that all forms of death are abolished for believers when death is swallowed up at the end of the millennial kingdom is contextually suspicious in that the context places the swallowing up of death at the point of the rapture. Because this complete victory over death is given at the point of rapture, it must be limited, at least in its full aspect, to those who are victorious, that is, to overcomers. Chitwood correctly acknowledges that unfaithful believers are subject to a 1000 years of misthological death following the rapture. Thus the victorious swallowing up of death, as anticipated in this passage, cannot possibly include unfaithful believers. They will have imperishable bodies that are not subject to physical death, to be sure. But Paul is envisioning something much more than mere victory over physical death. In this immediate context, he is discussing the necessity of having imperishable bodies so that one can inherit the kingdom (1Cor 15:50). Having an imperishable body is necessary to wear an imperishable crown, and Paul already had discussed the necessity of running victoriously in order to win this crown earlier within this same epistle (1Cor 9:24-27), and he warned the Corinthians that they must live righteously if they were going to inherit the kingdom (1Cor 6:9-10). Consistent with this misthological focus, Paul concludes ch. 15 with this admonition: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is **not in vain** in the Lord” (1Cor 15:58).³

Yet Chitwood would have us imagine that Paul is concluding this chapter by telling the Corinthians to work hard knowing that their toil **is in vain!** By imagining that this swallowing up of death is a soteriological promise to unfaithful and faithful believers alike that destroys misthological distinctions at the conclusion of the millennium, age-limiting advocates are asking us to believe that Paul is saying work hard in view of a victory over death which will abolish misthological death and therefore make rewards null and void.

On the basis of 1Cor 15:25-26 and Rev 21:4, age-limiting proponents contend that rewards cease when death is abolished, that is, when death is swallowed up. They locate this event at the end of the millennial kingdom. However, Paul inaugurates this abolishment of death at the point of the rapture for those believers transformed at that time. If the abolishment of death means the cessation of rewards, then rewards cease at the rapture—at the very point at which believers are caught up to be judged at the Bema and given their rewards. The age-lasting proposition is contextually suspicious and logically preposterous.

Briefly, to summarize my discussions elsewhere (e.g., OD and RAE), Paul is drawing upon the OT background:

⁶ And the Lord of hosts will prepare **a lavish banquet** for all peoples **on this mountain**; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine. ⁷ And **on this mountain** He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations. ⁸ He will **swallow up death for all time**, and the Lord God **will wipe tears away from all faces**, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. (Is 25:6-8).

² Arlen Chitwood, *Ruth: A study about Christ and the Church — Past, Present, Future*, revised edition (Norman, OK: The Lamp Broadcast, Inc., 2012), 165

³ Verse 58 demands that verse 57 be understood as holding forth the possibility of reward: This victory over death is *given as a reward* to those believers who are victorious in their work for the Lord. Paul’s rationale in 1Cor 15:51-58 is very much like his argument in 1Thess 5:9-10. God has not destined any believers to tribulational wrath but to earn misthological salvation. The former is unconditional to all believers; the latter is conditional. See my book, *Destined for Salvation*. So too here, all believers will be raptured but only faithful believers will be granted this type of misthological victory over death so that they experience no form of death, particularly no misthological death.

Misthologists recognize that this *lavish banquet* is a reward experienced during the millennial kingdom. It would be better to say that it is **inaugurated** at the millennial kingdom.⁴ Paul sees the swallowing up of death for all time (millennial kingdom and eternal kingdom), at the misthological level at least, which is his focus, as a reward. His doing so is consistent with the OT background, for Isaiah also considers it a reward, limiting it, like the banquet, to those who live *on this mountain* (a.k.a., the Mountain City). In short, residents of this Reward City (i.e., Mount Zion) will qualify for this reward. And residence in this city is limited to the faithful. The wiping away of tears is also a reward promised to all residents in this Reward City. Since it is a reward, it does not apply to unfaithful believers. John pictures this wiping away of tears was a reward, limiting it to those faithful believers who wash their robes and make them white (Rev 7:14-17).⁵ In Rev 21:1-7, John also depicts this wiping away of tears and the complete absence of any form of death as rewards limited to *overcomers* (*nikao*). Overcomers are believers who *are victorious*. He associates these rewards with New Jerusalem (a.k.a., the Reward City, Mount Zion, Heb 12:22). “These things,” as John calls them, are inherited by the overcomers, not by subcomers (Rev 21:7). Victory over death is one of the misthological benefits given to those believers who are victorious. The inaugurated nature of these rewards is confirmed by John who affirms that the wiping away of tears is a reward that starts long before the millennial kingdom even commences (Rev 7:17). Clearly, Isaiah, Paul, and John have their eyes fixated upon the misthological nature of these benefits, and they see the experience of these rewards as beginning before the end of the millennial kingdom and retaining their misthological nature at the conclusion of the millennial kingdom and therefore into eternity. The end of the millennial kingdom provides a suitable climax, not a conclusion, for the focus of these rewards, a climax to the extent that we are able to fathom them readily presently anyway. These rewards will be even more precious and rare in eternity as humanity continues to grow numerically.

Even this passage from Isaiah (25:6-8), when properly understood, takes us up to the threshold of eternity and holds forth the promises of no death and no tears as rewards during the eternal state. Indeed, Isaiah peers across the threshold and says, “Instead of your shame you will have a *double portion*, and instead of humiliation they will *shout for joy over their portion*. Therefore they will possess a *double portion* in their land, *everlasting joy* will be theirs” (Is 61:7). A double portion is a misthological benefit limited to the faithful. They will have everlasting joy over their double portion. Consequently, their reward must be eternal. They rejoice over the fact that their portion is double. For how long? The numerous translations I consulted concur that it is *everlasting, eternal, for all time, forever*. Only one translation, *Young’s Literal Translation* (YLT), said otherwise. This translation is a favorite among those taking an age-limiting approach because it trends to translate such expression as referring to an *age* whenever possible, and many times when impossible! For example, it translates the end of this verse as, “Joy age-during is for them” Does that translation make any sense? What happens at the end of the age? Do faithful believers lose their joy and start weeping then? Of course not! This translation is nonsensical.

Eternity in the OT

Some extreme age-lasting advocates have gone so far as to make the wild assertion that all references to *forever* and *eternal* in the OT really only mean *age-lasting* and that *aion* is only used in the singular, not the plural. The blatancy of this error is so great that it will simply be ignored. One cannot help be notice that this statement is not in accord with the facts as the evidence is examined below. A better approach taken by some having this mindset is to pose the question, “How can a singular *age* refer to multiple *ages*?” This question is reasonable but not if used as a cop-out to avoid examining the data. The more fundamental question is to first ask, “Can a singular age refer to multiple ages?” If this does indeed appear to be the case, then one would ask, “How?” Proper scientific procedure would be to examine the evidence and then formulate a hypothesis to explain the data. The Bereans were considered noble-minded because they “received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Let us be Bereans and not conclude *a priori* that these things cannot be so as an excuse to avoid examine the Scriptures to see if these things are so. In short, can a singular from of *aion* (Greek) or *alam* or *olam* (Hebrew) refer to a great length of time than one normally would associate with more than one age? The contention of this supplemental study is that the singular form is used in this plural capacity. However, let it be noted that the thesis undertaken in RAE does not require proof of this proposition. All one needs to do to prove that rewards are eternal is prove that the plural

⁴ Isaiah telescopes the banquet which commences the millennial kingdom (25:6) with the removal of death which climaxes in the conclusion of the millennium (Is 25:7-8). Paul likewise places the abolishment of death at the conclusion of the millennium (1Cor 15:24-26). However, using Isaiah’s imagery Paul places the swallowing up of death at the rapture (1Cor 15:51-55). Consequently, this victory over death is inaugurated as a reward for the faithful at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. To assume that in Paul’s mind the swallowing up of death spells the end of rewards makes a mockery out of Paul’s concluding exhortation (1Cor 15:58).

⁵ Jesus likewise taught that this removal of sorrow was a reward limited to the faithful (Mt 5:4; Lk 6:21). Isaiah confirmed its misthological nature by promising it to all those who reside in Mount Zion (Is 25:7-8; 35:10; 60:20; 61:2-3).

form of such words are used in relation to rewards.

More careful advocates of this age-lasting limitation acknowledge that *aion* in the plural refers to eternity and that the words translated as *forever* and *eternal* in the OT are properly translated in this manner at times, depending on the context, especially as these forms are used in relation to God. In RAE, several age-limiting authors were quoted who acknowledged that duplicated, serial, or plural ages would necessarily denote eternity. Chitwood was a case in point:

Aion and *aionios* are usually thought of and used numerous times in the N.T. in the sense of “an age.” And a usage of this nature is even brought over into English. For example, the English word “aeon [or ‘eon’]” is derived from the Greek word *aion*.

The only way in which the Greek text can express “eternal” apart from textual considerations is through a use of *aion* in the plural [e.g., Luke 1:33; Heb. 13:8, referring to “the ages,” i.e., ages without end, which would comprise eternity] or a double use of *aion*, in the plural and articular both times [e.g., Rev. 1:6; 4:9, 10, referring to “the ages of the ages,” again, ages without end].⁶ (Inserts and emphasis his.)

The heart of Chitwood’s statement is the explicit admission: “The only way in which the Greek text can express ‘eternal’ apart from textual considerations is through a use of *aion* in the plural...or a double use of *aion*.”⁷ In other words, if you find a plural or duplicated use of *aion*, you do not even need to check the context; you can know for certain that it means eternal. Implicitly, if the plural form is not used, the context must be checked to see if the singular form of age is referring to eternity. RAE focused primarily on the plural forms because this sufficed to demonstrate that rewards are eternal. The present study, being supplementary in nature, will focus principally on the singular form of *aion* instead in order to collaborate the conclusions already made possible by Chitwood’s explicit statement. First, to cut to the heart of the matter, however, an abbreviated review of the principle plural forms is in order.

Dan 7:18

Pertaining to this discussion of *aion* as found in Rev 22:5, one would be remiss not to point out the Danielic background for this passage as found in Dan 7:18.

Illustration 1. Dan 7:18 & Rev 22:5

➤ Rev 22:5

- ❖ Greek: καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων
- ❖ Literal: And they will reign into the ages [pl. *aion*] of the ages [pl. *aion*].
- ❖ TM: And they will reign *forever* and *ever*.

➤ Dan 7:18a

- ❖ Greek: καὶ παραλήψονται τὴν βασιλείαν ἅγιοι ὑψίστου
- ❖ Literal: And they will receive the kingdom saints of the Most High.
- ❖ TM: And the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom.

➤ Dan 7:18b

- ❖ Greek: καὶ καθέξουσι τὴν βασιλείαν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων
- ❖ Literal: And they will possess the kingdom onto the age [sg. *aion*], even onto the age [sg. *aion*] of the ages [pl. *aion*].
- ❖ TM: And they will possess the kingdom *forever, even forever and ever*.

Because the rulership (possession of the kingdom) referenced in this Danielic verse is exercised during the millennial kingdom, it must be a reward limited to faithful believers. Yet those misthologists who deny that rewards are eternal nevertheless admit that, when the Greek text uses *aion* in the plural, it necessarily means *eternal*, even regardless of contextual considerations. And as can be seen above, both Dan 7:18 and Rev 22:5 use the plural form of *aion*. Therefore, on the basis of their own lexical admission, Dan 7:18 must be expressing an eternal dominion. Yet this rulership is a reward that commences in the millennial kingdom! Because this rulership is eternal (according to the plural *aion*), it cannot be limited to the millennial kingdom. Because it is a reward (according to the context), it cannot be a gift. Thus this rulership is an eternal reward.

⁶ Arlen Chitwood, *The Most High Ruleth*, revised edition (Norman, OK: The Lamp Broadcast, Inc., 2013), 51.

⁷ Ibid.

Illustration 2. Dan 7:18 Syllogism

1. The rulership exercised in Dan 7:18 is eternal.
2. The rulership exercised in Dan 7:18 is a reward.
3. Therefore, the rulership exercised in Dan 7:18 is an eternal reward.

Illustration 3. Rev 22:5 is just Part of Dan 7:18



Whereas Dan 7:18 focuses on the beginning of this eternal misthological reign, showing the start of this rulership during the millennial kingdom, Rev 22:5 focuses on the continuation of this eternal misthological reign during the eternal state. Some misthologists miss the point completely when they conclude erroneously that unfaithful believers not holding positions of power and authority during the millennial kingdom will have a part in this rulership during eternity (Rev 21:4; 22:2,5). Not so! Far to the contrary, those Christians who were denied positions of authority in the millennial rulership will not have a part in the eternal rulership! Rev 22:5 is the logical extension of Dan 7:18. The OT background found in Daniel already has established that the misthological rulership entailed is an **eternal reward** that begins in the millennial kingdom. As pictured in the illustration, the eternal rulership confirmed in **Rev 22:5 is just a subset (⊂) of the millennial-eternal rulership affirmed in Dan 7:18**. The plural *aion* of Dan 7:18 governs both the nature and duration of the reign. The nature of the reign is a reward, and its duration is forever. It is an eternal reward. This misthological rulership cannot be confined to the millennial kingdom.

RAE also looked at Dan 7:18 in regards to the Hebrew word used (*alam*, denoted in red below) and its context:

1. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an **everlasting [singular]** dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. (Dan 7:14)
2. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom **forever [singular]**, even **forever [singular]** and **ever [plural]**. (Dan 7:18; NKJ)
3. Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an **everlasting [singular]** kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him. (Dan 7:27)

YLT completely misses the contextual setting of *alam* when it translates Dan 7:27 as, “And the kingdom, and the dominion, even the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, is given to the people—the saints of the Most High, His kingdom is a kingdom **age-during**, and all dominions do serve and obey Him.” Yet even YLT cannot avoid the eternity of Dan 7:18: “And receive the kingdom do the saints of the Most High, and they strengthen the kingdom unto the **age**, even unto the **age** of the **ages**.” The singular *kingdom age* in question is *unto the age of the ages*. The *kingdom age* = *the age of the ages*. Its singularity is expressed by the plurality. Therefore, as restated in this supplemental study, the singular form of *age* can encompass multiple *ages*. The kingdom age is not limited to the millennial age.

Dan 2:44

One of the collaborative texts cited but not expanded upon in RAE will suffice to confirm this point:

- And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will **never [plural]** be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure **forever [plural]**. (Dan 2:44)

The translation above of Dan 2:44 is from the NAS. The YLT translates it as: “And in the days of these kings raise up doth the God of the heavens a kingdom that is not destroyed—to the **age**, and its kingdom to another people is not left: it beateth small and endeth all these kingdoms, and it standeth to the **age**.” Notice that RAE states that both occurrences to *alam* are plural, but YLT translates *age* as singular on both occasions. Which one is right? Is it a matter of opinion or interpretation? Not at all! Without question the YLT misses this translation.

OG versus TH

The first reference to *age* is plural in Hebrew (plural of *alam*) and in Greek (plural of *aion*). The second reference to *age* is plural in Hebrew, using the plural of *alam*. But it is only plural in the Greek *Theodotion* (TH), which uses the plural of *aion*. The *Older Greek* (OG) has the singular of *aion* for the second occurrence. Thus in reference to eternity it is possible to translate the plural form of *alam* with either the singular form of *aion* or the plural form of *aion*. Secondly, and most importantly, both the Hebrew and Greek (OG and TH) agree that this kingdom is an eternal kingdom. This text is a classic dispensational text regarding the messianic kingdom, and it clearly affirms that the messianic kingdom which follows the tribulation is an eternal kingdom.

Pleading ignorance of the Greek is no excuse. You can confirm what is being said herein with a few clicks on the internet. For example, you can click on <http://en.katabiblon.com/us/index.php?text=LXX> to investigate the Greek OT text (LXX). Daniel is provided in two Greek translations: *Older Greek* (OG) and *Theodotion* (TH). After clicking on the LXX link, you can click on the LXX translation you want and then click on the Greek word for *aion*. For reference, see the red words below.

OG: καὶ ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις τῶν βασιλέων τούτων στήσει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ βασιλείαν ἄλλην ἣτις ἔσται εἰς τοὺς **αἰῶνας** καὶ οὐ φθαρήσεται καὶ αὕτη ἡ βασιλεία ἄλλο ἔθνος οὐ μὴ ἑάσῃ πατάξει δὲ καὶ ἀφανίσει τὰς βασιλείας ταύτας καὶ αὕτη στήσεται **εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα**

TH: καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν βασιλέων ἐκείνων ἀναστήσει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ βασιλείαν ἣτις εἰς τοὺς **αἰῶνας** οὐ διαφθαρήσεται καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ λαῶ ἑτέρῳ οὐχ ὑπολειφθήσεται λεπτυνεῖ καὶ λικμήσει πάσας τὰς βασιλείας καὶ αὕτη ἀναστήσεται **εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας**

Or, if you prefer, you can consult the chart below to compare the form of the Greek word with a standard chart that shows the four singular forms of *aion* and its four plural forms.

Illustration 4. Singular and Plural Forms of Aion

Singular		Plural	
Greek	Transliterated	Greek	Transliterated
αἰών	<i>aion</i>	αἰῶνες	<i>aiones</i>
αἰῶνος	<i>aionos</i>	αἰῶνων	<i>aionon</i>
αἰῶνι	<i>aioni</i>	αἰῶσι	<i>aiosi</i>
αἰῶνα	<i>aiona</i>	αἰῶνας	<i>aionas</i>

The first reference to *aion* in both the OG and the TH uses the plural form *aionas*. However, the second occurrence is singular in the OG and plural in the TH:

OG: And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which **will not be destroyed into the ages**, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure **into the age**. (TM)

TH: And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which **will be into the ages and not be destroyed**, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure **into the ages**. (TM)

In the OG, the phrase *never be destroyed* literally would rendered *will not be destroyed into the ages*. In the TH, the literal rendition would be *will be into the ages and not be destroyed*. The idea is basically the same: *This kingdom*

will endure forever. The messianic kingdom is an eternal kingdom. This affirmation is restated in the second part of the verse. The OG version of the LXX uses the singular form *age* to denote *forever*; the TH version of the LXX uses the plural form *ages* to denote *forever*. Personally, I prefer the TH rendition. Nevertheless, the OG is valid. Contextually, OG's singular *age* in the second half of the verse is equivalent to OG's plural *ages* in the first half of the verse.

Therefore, the age-limiting argument loses either way. The first part of the verse uses the plural form of *ages* in reference to the kingdom that is set up at the conclusion of the tribulation. This kingdom is not limited to the millennial age. It is an eternal kingdom, lasting forever. Secondly, OG uses the singular form *age* in the second half of the verse interchangeably with the plural form *ages* in the first half. Both the singular and plural form are valid ways of expressing this eternal aspect of the kingdom. As noted above the question, "How can a singular age refer to multiple ages?" was premature. This first question that should be asked is, "Can a singular age refer to multiple ages? One should then examine the data and see if this is the case. As seen in the LXX renderings for Dan 2:44, the singular form of *aion* can indeed be used to refer to multiple ages. This is a statement of fact. Having now observed this to be the factual case, we may formulate a hypothesis to answer the secondary question: "How can a singular age refer to multiple ages?"

Hypothesis of Plurality Expressed by Singularity

A hypothesis is readily available: When the writer wishes to stress or specify the eternal nature of what is being affirmed, the plural form is the natural choice; otherwise, the singular form suffices, with the context determining if eternity is in view in the case of the singular form. This proposal flows naturally enough from Chitwood's own acknowledgment noted above: "The only way in which the Greek text can express 'eternal' apart from textual considerations is through a use of *aion* in the plural...or a double use of *aion*." If the writer chooses to use the plural form, he does so to be explicit and/or emphatic. Otherwise, the singular form may be used, which is generic. The working hypothesis formulated herein, therefore, is: **The plural form *ages* is an explicit and/or emphatic expression of eternity. The singular form of *age* is a generic reference that may or may not be referring to eternity. The context must be consulted for clarification when the singular form of *age* is used.**

Dan 12:3

The formulation of this hypothesis is not based on an isolated occurrence of the data. Collaboration of this rule is derivable from an investigation of the singular form of *aion* in the additional material to follow. First, however, one more example of a plural form already discussed in RAE will be brought forward for review. The context of Dan 12:3 was discussed in RAE, and the verse was shown to be dealing with rewards. Rather than repeat that discussion here, I will simply give readers the means to confirm that plural ages are in view for themselves. Just go to <http://en.katabiblon.com/us/index.php?text=LXX> and confirm the text below for Dan 12:3. Once there, you can either click on the words denoted in red below on that website or consult the chart above in *Illustration 4* to confirm the singularity and plurality of *aion* in Greek.

OG: καὶ οἱ συνιέντες φανοῦσιν ὡς φωστῆρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ κατισχύοντες τοὺς λόγους μου ὡσεὶ τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος

TH: καὶ οἱ συνιέντες ἐκλάμψουσιν ὡς ἡ λαμπρότης τοῦ στερεώματος καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δικαίων τῶν πολλῶν ὡς οἱ ἀστέρες εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας καὶ ἔτι

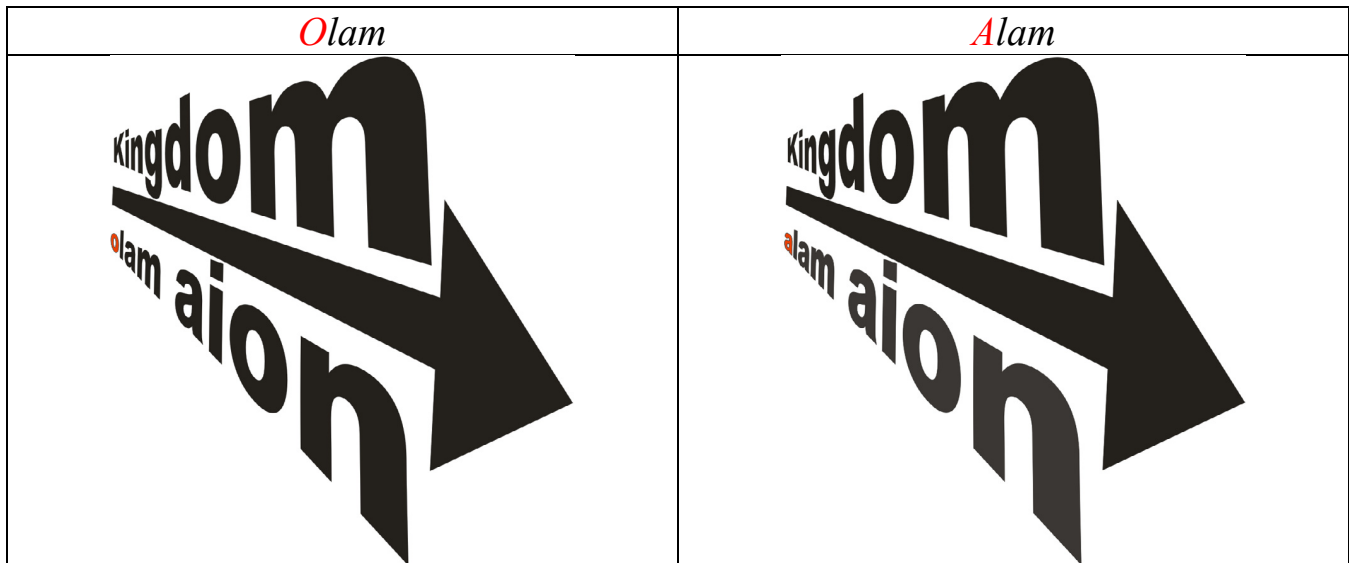
In RAE, I imply referred to *aion* in this verse as being plural: "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven. And those who instruct the many in righteousness will shine like the stars **forever and ever [Heb. *olam and ad*; Gr. pl. *aion*]**" (Dan 12:1-3; TM). More specifically, OG uses the singular form twice, which is plural by virtue of its "double use of *aion*," which Chitwood acknowledged must denote eternity. TH simply uses the plural form once, which Chitwood acknowledged must denote eternity. In summary, Daniel does not limit the kingdom promised to faithful believers to one age; rather, he clearly shows that this reward goes on forever. Rewards are eternal according to Daniel, not merely millennial.

Illustration 5. Age of the Age

Psa 9:5	Thou hast rebuked the nations; Thou hast destroyed the wicked; Thou hast blotted out their name forever and ever.
Psa 10:16	The LORD is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land.
Psa 45:6	Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.
Psa 45:17	I will cause Thy name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the peoples will give Thee thanks forever and ever.
Psa 48:14	For such is God, Our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death.
Psa 52:8	But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever.
Psa 61:8	So I will sing praise to Thy name forever; That I may pay my vows day by day.
Psa 72:19	And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.
Psa 83:17	Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever; And let them be humiliated and perish,
Psa 89:29	"So I will establish his descendants forever, And his throne as the days of heaven.
Psa 92:7	That when the wicked sprouted up like grass, And all who did iniquity flourished, It was only that they might be destroyed forevermore.
Psa 104:5	He established the earth upon its foundations, So that it will not totter forever and ever.
Psa 111:3	Splendid and majestic is His work; And His righteousness endures forever.
Psa 111:8	They are upheld forever and ever; They are performed in truth and uprightness.
Psa 111:10	The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.
Psa 112:3	Wealth and riches are in his house, And his righteousness endures forever.
Psa 112:9	He has given freely to the poor; His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted in honor.
Psa 119:44	So I will keep Thy law continually; Forever and ever.
Psa 145:1	A Psalm of Praise, of David. I Will extol Thee, my God, O King; And I will bless Thy name forever and ever.
Psa 145:2	Every day I will bless Thee, And I will praise Thy name forever and ever.
Psa 145:21	My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD; And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.
Psa 148:6	He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.
Dan 12:3	"And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The above list was generated by search for the phrase *αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος* in the LXX. The NAS translates it as *forever* or as *forever and ever*. In any event, Chitwood acknowledged that the duplicated form would denote *forever*. God’s throne is not merely for an age. His righteousness does not endure merely for an age. The LXX uses the same expression to say that reward of shining brightly like a star given to those who have insight will be forever and ever. Those kingdom teachers who limit rewards to 1000 years are certainly lacking insight into what Daniel is saying in passages such as these. Why assume that such teachers will shine brightly?

Illustration 6. Olam and Alam



In both Dan 2:44 and 7:18 (cp. 7:27) the singular *kingdom age* in question, which follows the tribulation, is *unto the age of the ages*. The *kingdom age* = *the age of the ages*. Singularity expresses plurality. Misthological regality is a perpetuity. The same conclusion depicted regarding *alam* in Dan 2:44 and 7:18 is fully applicable to *olam* in Dan 12:3. Even YLT gets Dan 12:3 right: “And those teaching do shine as the brightness of the expanse, and those justifying the multitude as stars to the *age* and *for ever*.” As applied to the kingdom age, both words are used to confirm the eternal nature of rewards. The misthological kingdom is eternal.

Singular forms of Aion

RAE did not pursue the singular form of *aion* because advocates of the age-limitation theory had conceded that the plural form of *aion*, if applied to rewards, would disprove their case. Therefore, RAE promptly demonstrated that the plural form of *aion* is used in relation to rewards and therefore the age-limiting argument is false. Nevertheless, in order that the frivolous nature of age-limiting argument might further be demonstrated and the working hypothesis being used herein further defended, the following texts are provided as a sampling of the singular form of *aion* used to refer to something which is potentially last more than one age in denoting that which is *eternal* or lasts *forever*:

Examples of Aion in the OT

The following translations are, for the most part, from the NAS and provide examples where *aion* in the singular must refer to multiple ages, typically translated correctly as *forever*.

- Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live **forever**.” (Gen 3:22).

Do age-limiting advocates really think that eating of the tree of life would only have preserve Adam’s life for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I shall come to you in a thick cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe in you **forever**.” Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. (Ex 19:9)

Do age-limiting advocates really think that the people of Israel are supposed to stop believing Moses after an age? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants to whom Thou didst swear by Thyself, and didst say to them, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it **forever**.” (Ex 32:13)

Do age-limiting advocates really think that Israel only inherits the land for an age? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons **forever**, that we may observe all the words of this law. (Dt 29:28)

Do age-limiting advocates really think that God takes away what He has revealed to us after a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, as I live **forever**. (Dt 32:40)

Do age-limiting advocates really think that God only lives a 1000 years? Does this singular use of age not prove that a singular age may mean *forever*?

- That Thy name may be magnified **forever**, by saying, “The LORD of hosts is God over Israel”; and may the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee. (2Sam 7:26)

Is the true intent of this passage that God’s name may only be magnified for a 1000 years? Does this singular use of age not prove that a singular age may mean *forever*?

- Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is **everlasting**. (1Chron 16:34)

Is God’s lovingkindness simply being affirmed as being age-lasting? Does this singular use of age not prove that a singular age may mean *everlasting*?

- For Thy people Israel Thou didst make Thine own people **forever**, and Thou, O LORD, didst become their God. (1Chron 17:22)

Will Israel only be God's people for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- But the LORD abides **forever**; He has established His throne for judgment. (Ps 9:7)

Does the Lord only abide for a 1000 years? Does this use of age not prove that a singular age may mean *forever*?

- The counsel of the LORD stands **forever**, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Ps 33:11)

Is God's counsel only good for a 1000 years? Does this use of age not prove that a singular age may mean *forever*?

- But Thou, O LORD, art on high **forever**. (Ps 92:8)

Is God only exalted on high for a 1000 years? Does this use of age not prove that a singular age may mean *forever*?

- Let the glory of the LORD endure **forever**; let the LORD be glad in His works. (Ps 104:31).

Does God glory only endure for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest **forever** According to the order of Melchizedek." (Ps 110:4)

Is Jesus only a priest for a 1000 years? Does this use of age not prove that a singular age may mean forever?

- Thy righteousness is an **everlasting** righteousness, and Thy law is truth. (Ps 119:142)

Is God's righteousness only an age-lasting righteousness? Does this use of age not prove that a singular age may mean forever?

- The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is **everlasting**. (Ps 119:160)

Does the truth of God's word have an expiration date? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains **forever**. (Ecc 1:4)

Does the Earth only remain for an age? Surely, the Earth as we know it lasts for at least 6 ages does it not? Man's Age is for 6 ages. So here is a singular use of *aión* referring to at least 6 ages! Contrary to those age-limiting advocates who stipulate that a singular age can only be used of something that is eternal when used of God, *aión* is used in the singular in this verse to refer to something that lasts multiple ages other than God.

- Trust in the LORD **forever**, for in God the LORD, *we have* an everlasting Rock. (Is 26:4)

Are we being exhorted to trust in the Lord only for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands **forever**. (Is 40:8)

Does God's word only stand for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- Israel has been saved by the LORD with an *everlasting* salvation; you will not be put to shame or humiliated to all **eternity**. (Is 45:17)

Is Israel to be shamed and humiliated after the 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*? Likewise, *everlasting* salvation uses as singular form of the adjective *aiónios*. The singular form of this adjective can mean *everlasting*.

- Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will

wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die in like manner, but My salvation shall be **forever**, and My righteousness shall not wane. (Is 51:6)

If this salvation last longer than the Earth, does it not last longer than a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives **forever**, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Is 57:15)

Does God only live for an age? Does God die after a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- Thou, O LORD, dost rule **forever**; Thy throne is from generation to generation. (Lam 5:19)

Does God only rule for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an *everlasting* covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst **forever**. (Eze 37:28)

Will God remove His sanctuary out of their midst after a 1000 years? Just as the singular form of *aion* means *forever* in this verse, so the singular form of its adjective *aionios* means *everlasting*.

- And He said to me, “Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel **forever**. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die. (Eze 43:7)

Is the intent of the passage to say that God will only dwell among Israel for a 1000 years? Does this singular age not mean *forever*?

- And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which **will not be destroyed into the ages**, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure **into the age**. (Dan 2:44 OG, TM)
- And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which **will be into the ages and not be destroyed**, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure **into the ages**. (Dan 2:44 TH; TM)

The NAS correctly translates the expression *into the age(s)* as *forever* in Dan 2:44. The YLT, in contrast, completely mistranslates both expressions as a singular *age*: “And in the days of these kings raise up doth the God of the heavens a kingdom that is not destroyed—**to the age**, and its kingdom to another people is not left: it beateth small and endeth all these kingdoms, and it standeth **to the age**.” The first reference to *age* is plural in both Hebrew (plural of *alam*) and Greek (plural of *aion*). For the YLT to miss this plurality and mistranslate it as a singular *age* is inexcusable. The second reference to *age* is plural in Hebrew (plural of *alam*) but only plural in the Greek TH text, using Greek (plural of *aion*). The OG has the singular of *aion* for the second occurrence. Thus one can easily confirm from the data that it is possible to translate the plural form of *alam* with either the singular form of *aion* or the plural form of *aion*. Both the singular form of *aion* and the plural form of *aion* forms reference eternity in this passage. Why can the LXX use either the singular or plural form of *aion* to mean multiple *ages*? The hypothesis put forth herein is that **the plural form is the more specific and/or emphatic expression of eternity; the singular form is generic and depends upon the context for clarification**. Secondly, and indisputably, both the Hebrew and Greek (OG and TH) agree that the first usage of *aion* is plural; therefore, this kingdom is an eternal kingdom. This text is a classic dispensational text regarding the messianic kingdom, and it clearly affirms that it is an eternal kingdom.

- I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for He is the living God and enduring **forever**, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever. (Dan 6:26)

Does God’s kingdom not last as long as He does, for eternity? And does not the LXX use both the singular form of *aion*

(so OG) and the plural form (so TH) to convey this concept of eternity? OG has *aion* in the singular, TH in the plural. Like most translations, the YLT follows the Hebrew text as translated by TH, which is reasonable. Thus YLT translates it as *ages*, which is again reasonable, as the Hebrew uses the plural of *alam* and the Greek the plural of *aion*. However, the OG uses the singular form of *aion* to convey the same point. Once again, the explanation put forth herein is that the plural form is the more specific and or emphatic expression of eternity. The singular form is generic and depends upon the context for clarification.

- I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and **forever**. (Micah 4:7)

Will the Lord only reign for a 1000 years? Is this rulership (and thus kingdom) not eternal?

Examples of Aion in the NT

The YLT is used for the following NT selections of *aion* in the singular. Age-limiting advocates tend to appeal to this translation. Yet YLT has been shown above to be unreliable in its treatment of *aion* in the OT. Its treatment of *aion* in the NT is much worse.

- But whoever may drink of the water that I will give him, may not thirst—to the **age**; and the water that I will give him shall become in him a well of water, springing up to life age-during. (Jn 4:14, YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit the thirst-quenching ability of living water to a mere *age*? Does this water not quench our soteriological thirst eternally?

- I am the living bread that came down out of the heaven; if any one may eat of this bread he shall live—to the **age**; and the bread also that I will give is my flesh, that I will give for the life of the world. (Jn 6:51; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus not promise eternal life, not mere millennial life? YLT imposes its mistaken limitation on even such a fundamental passage as Jn 3:16: “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*” (YLT). The adjective *aionios* does not mean *age-during* in such a context but *eternal*. This fundamental understanding on the part of YLT has far reaching implications throughout the Gospel of John.

- This is the bread that came down out of the heaven; not as your fathers did eat the manna, and died; he who is eating this bread shall live—to the **age**.' (Jn 6:58; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus not promise eternal life, not mere millennial life?

- And the servant doth not remain in the house—to the age, the son doth remain—to the **age**. (Jn 8:35)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does the son not remain in the house forever?

- Verily, verily, I say to you, If any one may keep my word, death he may not see—to the **age**.' (Jn 8:51; TM)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? What happens at the end of the 1000 years? Do those who keep God's word experience death then?

- And life age-during I give to them, and they shall not perish—to the **age**, and no one shall pluck them out of my hand. (Jn 10:28; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to think that Jesus only gives age-lasting life that keeps one from dying during the millennial age? Does the life that Jesus gives have an expiration date?

- And every one who is living and believing in me shall not die—to the **age**. (Jn 11:26; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does the life that Jesus gives have an expiration date? Do those who believe in Jesus die at the conclusion of the millennial kingdom?

- The multitude answered him, “We heard out of the law that the Christ doth remain—to the **age**; and how dost thou say, That it behoveth the Son of Man to be lifted up? who is this—the Son of Man?” (Jn 12:34; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Did they really think that the Messiah would only remain until the age?

- And I will ask the Father, and another Comforter He will give to you, that he may remain with you—to the age. (Jn 14:16; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does the Spirit only remain with us until the millennial age and then leave us?

- According as it hath been written, “He dispersed abroad, he gave to the poor, his righteousness doth remain to the **age**.” (2Cor 9:9; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to suggest that God’s righteousness only lasts for an *age*?

- As also in another *place* He saith, “Thou art a priest—to the age, according to the order of Melchisedek.” (Heb 5:6; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus cease to be a priest when the millennial kingdom starts?

- Whither a forerunner for us did enter— Jesus, after the order of Melchisedek chief priest having become—to the **age**. (Heb 6:20; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus cease to be a priest when the millennial kingdom starts?

- For He doth testify— “Thou art a priest—to the **age**, according to the order of Melchisedek.” (Heb 7:17; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus cease to be a priest when the millennial kingdom starts?

- And inasmuch as it is not apart from oath, (for those indeed apart from oath are become priests, ²¹ and he with an oath through Him who is saying unto him, “The Lord swear, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest—to the **age**, according to the order of Melchisedek).” (Heb 7:20; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus cease to be a priest when the millennial kingdom starts?

- And he, because of his remaining—to the **age**, hath the priesthood not transient. (Heb 7:24; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus only remain until the millennial kingdom or for a 1000 years?

- For the law doth appoint men chief priests, having infirmity, but the word of the oath that is after the law appointeth the Son—to the **age** having been perfected. (Heb 7:28; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Or is Jesus only perfect until the age? Does Jesus become imperfect when the millennial kingdom starts or after a 1000 years?

- And the saying of the Lord doth remain—to the **age**; and this is the saying that was proclaimed good news to you. (1Pet 1:25; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Is God’s word only good to the age?

- And increase ye in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to him is the glory both now, and to the day of the **age**! Amen. (2Pet 3:18; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does Jesus cease to be worth of glory during or after the millennial kingdom?

- And the world doth pass away, and the desire of it, and he who is doing the will of God, he doth remain—to the **age**. (1Jn 2:17, YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does the one who does the will of God not abide forever?

- Because of the truth that is remaining in us, and with us shall be to the **age**. (2Jn 1:2; YLT)

Is YLT not wrong to limit *aion* to *age*? Does God truth leave us during or after the millennial age?

Summary

The vast preponderance of translations rightly translate the singular form of *aion* in the above passages in terms of eternity and thereby refute the erroneous YLT. Consequently, when the same form is used to refer to eschatological rewards, such as the kingdom, the presumption should be that an eternal benefit is in view. The kingdom is an eternal reward. This presumption is demonstrably true in that the plural form of *aion* is used of rewards and therefore necessarily affirms the eternal nature of rewards in Dan 7:18 and 12:3. The kingdom age is promised as a reward and therefore is eternal (1Sam 13:13; 2Sam 7:13,16; 1Kgs 9:5; 1Chron 17:14; 22:10; 28:7; Is 9:7). Indeed, the classic dispensational passage in Daniel 2:44 makes it clear, in both Hebrew and Greek, that the messianic kingdom is for eternity, expressed as multiple ages. To limit the singular form of *aion* to a single *age* in such cases ignores a vast amount of Scripture. As to the present point, to limit the messianic kingdom to the 1000 millennial age is a grave injustice to Dan 2:44 and 7:18.

Age-limiting advocates are wrong to think that the Bible limits the misthological kingdom to a 1000 years. While it is true that the millennial kingdom is limited to a 1000 years, this limitation is only spelled out in one passage in the Scripture (Rev 20:1-7). Contrastively, the misthological kingdom offered to us if we are faithful has eternity in scope (1Sam 13:13; 2Sam 7:13,16; 1Kgs 9:5; 1Chron 17:14; 22:10; 28:7; Is 9:7; Dan 7:18,27; 2Pet 1:11). This kingdom is eternal (Ps 145:13; Dan 2:44; 4:3; 6:26; 7:14,18,27; Heb 1:8). The emphasis in Scripture is on the eternal nature of this kingdom although the graphic details focus on its millennial introduction, possibly because this transitional form is the form that we can most easily comprehend.

Creation Week Model

The creation-week model, comprising six days of a thousand years each in duration as comprising *Man's Age* (i.e., 6k) to be followed by the creation day of rest lasting 1000 years comprising the *Millennial Age I* (i.e., 1k), is a major point for the age-limiting theory. While I do not insist upon this creation-week model, it is inductively plausible. Thus I am sympathetic with this 6k-1k model. In fact, I use it (and its counterpart 2k-2k-2k-1k model) as my working premise in my book, *Misthological Models Part I*. Indeed, by my calculations, if this creation-week (6k-1k) model is correct, the probability of the rapture would be around 70% during 2015-2018. For example, some calculate that the 6000 years of *Man's Age* are up in 2025; others believe that the 6000 years are completed in 2028. From such calculations we would have to subtract 10 years for the commencement of the Day of the Lord. Thus if this creation-week model is correct and if these calculations are correct, then the rapture probably would happen somewhere during the span of 2015-2018, probably on the Feast of Trumpets on one of those years. For myself, I'm hoping for September of 2015.

In any event, my agreement with this 6k-1k model does not lead me to limit the misthological kingdom to 1000 years. To be sure, the millennial kingdom is limited to a 1000 years, but this creation-week model is abused when it is used to limit the misthological kingdom to 1000 years, as proven by RAE and the supplementary texts above. The millennial introduction of this misthological rulership only lasts a 1000 years, but the misthological nature of this kingdom is eternal.

On a related note, as noted in the YLT list above, YLT mistranslates Jn 14:16 as, "And I will ask the Father, and another Comforter He will give to you, that he may remain with you—to the *age*." Most translations rightly render this verse as promising that the Holy Spirit will be with us *forever*. Accordingly, YLT wrongly limits *aion* to *age*. The Holy Spirit does not only remain with us until the millennial age and then leave us.

Age-limiting advocates might attempt to counter this claim by pointing out that Jesus uses a similar expression in Mt 28:20. On this occasion *aion* is translated normally as *age*: "Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the *age*." *Aion* is singular in Mt 28:20. It could be talking about (1) Christ's invisible presence with believers throughout the course of the church age (and tribulation), while they are performing this ministry of disciple making until the Lord returns visibly to judge the world (cp. Mt 13:39-40,49; 24:3), or (2) the end of the millennial age, or (3) be idiomatically equivalent to *forever*. The first interpretation is most likely the focus. Thus the singular *aion* is properly translated *age* on this occasion. The Lord is affirming that He will be with His workers while they are working, that is, through the end of the current *Man's Age*: 6000 years. If this correct, then this singular

age is referring to *six ages*! For Man's Age lasts six ages. Therefore, as stated above in regards to Ecc 1:4, those holding the age-limiting theory are wrong to insist that a singular form of age can only be used to refer to a singular age. The use of *aion* in the singular can refer to something that lasts multiple ages.

Additionally, as stated immediately above in regard to the millennial age and misthological age, the fact that Rev 20:1-6 focuses on the millennial scope of the misthological rulership does not mean that the misthological rulership ceases after a 1000 years. Just as the focus of Jesus' promises to be with His workers during the Man's Age (the age of work) does not mean that He leaves them at the conclusion of the Age of Work, when the Age of Rest (the millennial kingdom) starts. Idiomatically, to *the end of the age* in Mt 28:20 does mean *forever*, but the focus is on the first 6000 years of that *forever*. Similarly, the misthological nature of the rulership given to the faithful will be *forever* in Rev 20:1-6, but the focus is on the first 1000 years.⁸

The Peril of the Pearl

I had opportunity to hear an excellent sermon this year on the pearl of great price: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Mt 13:45-46). The preacher presenting this sermon pointed out that the pearl is not soteriological because the linear covering takes years to complete. The pearl is kingdom rulership and costs all that you have. In other words, entrance into the kingdom is free to anyone who believes in Jesus for eternal life, but rulership in the kingdom is costly, requiring that believers live for Christ. Splendid soteriology and misthology. Many superlatives were used to describe this pearl as being abnormal, extraordinary, exceptional, and mature. Many fine points were made during the sermon, but the preacher repeatedly referred to this kingdom rulership as being millennial in scope. Why? The text put no such limitation on the pearl's value. At the conclusion of the sermon, I asked the pastor privately, "Does the pearl become any less valuable after 1000 years? Does it become common?" The pastor wisely responded, "No, it does not." The implication of my question and his answer was immediately apparent. To put an age-lasting limitation on the exceptional nature of the pearl would have been injustice to the text. Why give all that you have to obtain such a pearl if everyone is going to be given such a pearl regardless?

The abnormal, extraordinary, exceptional pearl does not become normal, ordinary, or common after a 1000 years. Little pearls do not become pearls of great price after a 1000 years. Tares do not become wheat at the end of the 1000 years (Mt 13:37-43), and bad fish do not become good fish after a 1000 years (Mt 13:47-50). Time does not change the object in question once judgment is rendered. Once pearls are taken out of the oyster, they do not grow any more valuable. The time to grow is now! If we want to obtain this pearl of great price, that is, kingdom rulership, we must do so now. We cannot do so during the 1000 years of the millennial kingdom. If we want to become pearls of great price, that is, kingdom rulers, it will cost us now. Those imposing an age-lasting limitation on rewards are profaning the doctrine of rewards and the gospel of the kingdom. They are turning the pearl of great price into a cheap commodity, much to their own peril.

The first promise of the *kingdom* in the Bible is recorded in Ex 19:5-6: "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." The possibility of being such a "royal priesthood" and "holy nation" at this misthological is opened up to church-age believers as well (1Pet 2:9). However, in order to qualify misthologically for this holy kingdom status, you must obey God. Age-limiting advocates would take this holy kingdom status and make it unholy, common, and defiled after a 1000 years. The Greek verb *koinoo* means *to defile something by treating as common or making it unclean*. Its adjectival form *koinos* refers to something that is *common, defiled, unclean*. A voice from heaven told Peter: "What God has cleansed, no longer consider *unholy* [*koinos*]" (Acts 11:9). Considering something unholy that God considers holy is wrong. By the same token, it would be wrong to consider something that God considers unholy as holy. Distinguishing between the holy and profane is important to God. Those defiling this holy, misthological privilege by making it common after a 1000 years are profaning it by giving it away to the misthological unclean. Will God take this injustice to the faithful lightly?

The wealth in Solomon's kingdom grew to such an extent that "all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None was of silver; it was not considered valuable in the days of Solomon" (1Kgs 10:21). Silver was devalued because of the superabundance of gold. Those teaching that God becomes a communist after a thousand years by providing kingdom rulership to the faithful and unfaithful alike at that time are devaluing the pearls and crowns given by God so as to make them cheap trinkets in the eternal state. Those holding this age-limitation mindset devalue the gold, silver, and precious stones of 1Cor 3:12, treating them as no more valuable than wood, hay, and straw after a 1000 years. Paul says, "Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

⁸ As to Jn 14:16, the Holy Spirit will be with us *forever*. The contextual focus is not limited to a portion of that eternity.

Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, *sanctified [holy]*, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (2Tim 2:20-21). Age-limiting theorists claim that the distinction between gold, silver, wooden vessels and earthenware disappear after a 1000 years. They take what the Bible makes holy and limited to faithful believers and make it unholy (i.e., common) to all believers. If God does not hold these age-limiting advocates accountable for defiling His rewards in making them unholy and profane, then can it actually be said that God is just?

God is Just

Some age-lasting advocates are doing a grave injustice to God by quipping that “God is just” to forget your labor of love after a 1000 years. When asked, “Why God would treat all believers equally after a 1000 years?” some holding this age-limiting mindset actually respond that this reason is because “God is just.” In reality, though, the justice of God demands inequality, not equality:

¹⁰ For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. ¹¹ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Heb 6:10-12)

According to the Scripture for God to forget our work and treat the faithful and unfaithful alike in regard to inheriting the misthological promises would be unjust. The Bible exhorts us to be faithful because only the faithful will inherit the promises, assuring us that God would be unjust for forget our work by withholding our reward from us if we are faithful. The Bible encourages the faithful to bank on God being just to reward their faithfulness in laying up treasure in their heavenly bank account. Accordingly, if God were to give the same reward to the unfaithful that He gives to the faithful, then God would be unjust. To attribute their erroneousness notion that God treats the unfaithful and faithful alike at the conclusion of the 1000 years to the Bible is actually to teach in direct opposition to the biblical text. According to the Bible, God would be unjust to forget our works and not reward us after having promised to do so. The reasonable presumption from what the Bible actually has to say about God’s justice in rewarding those who lovingly work is that if God were to treat everyone alike and forget our works or make them of no account after a 1000 years, then it would be unjust for Him to do so. Age-limiting advocates are making a mockery of God’s misthological justice. Will God not hold those accountable who in reality teach that *He is unjust* when they falsely claim that *He is just* in forgetting our works? Giving God’s low opinion of false prophets, are we to assume that He has a high opinion of false misthologists? Is it not possible that royally dismissing what the Bible has to say about the eternal nature of kingdom royalty might disqualify such kingdom teachers from kingdom royalty, especially when they stand Scripture on its head to maintain their delusion and thereby discourage the faithful by telling them that God will count they loving work as worthless after a 1000 years?