

⁴ I am using the word rationalism loosely. Although many of my professors seemed to see reason as the foundation for viewing the universe, and the criteria for determining truth, they were probably more properly classified in this age of science as empiricists. For the data collected by the sciences and the humanities, rather than the deductions of pure reason seemed to be the foundation of their decisions. I suspect that most of my professors did not recognize themselves as humanists. They probably saw themselves as representing the way things are.

⁵ Note that although I was using metaphysical type thinking, I had also gone far beyond the medieval theologian, for I had affirmed the autonomy of the mind from pope, church, state, and the Bible. Man was free to found and determine his own truth apart from any external authority. Man had come of age. The rightful appreciation that Seventh-day Adventists have of God as seen through nature seems to have been taken in directions that are inappropriate. Rather than seeing appreciation of God through nature as the result of biblical theology where divine revelation in Scripture is the foundation, the revelation in nature independent of Scripture has become the foundation. The latter is a serious distortion of a proper understanding of revelation from "the book of nature." Divine revelation as identified with Scripture has priority and must function as the foundation of all knowledge, even revelation found in nature.

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PAULINE COSMOLOGY: RELIC OR RELEVANT?

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Terry Arries writes: "The cosmology of an individual or nation is the foundation of all further religious, judicial and political thought because all these beliefs are founded upon this elemental concept."¹ The importance of the subject of cosmology can be readily illustrated by the rich witness of the Scripture concerning it. The book of Genesis begins with it, and the book of Revelation ends with it.² However, in our time, the term cosmology has been widely interpreted. Because of this, we begin our study by attempting to define it.

Defining Cosmology

Cosmology, a term of rather recent origin, is defined as the understanding of our universe.³ In our scientific era many have limited its meaning strictly to the study of the physical world.⁴ For the purposes of the present study this definition cannot be accepted because it confines the study of cosmology solely to the intellectual realm. Observation, however, demonstrates that every person, whether he or she can articulate it or not, operates with a world view that enables him or her to cope with the forces that seem to lie beyond human experience and control. The broadness of our definition of cosmology is best summed up by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. He writes:

This [cosmology] includes such questions as what the substance of the universe is . . . whether the world has a beginning in time or not, whether it [the world] is animate or inanimate, whether it is destructible or indestructible, whether it is governed by providence, and all the rest.⁵

Notice that this definition includes metaphysics within cosmology as well as the investigation of the physical world.⁶ When this study refers to cosmology, it has in mind our dealings with the forces outside our control, that is, the transcendent reality of God working in history. It particularly includes the concepts of angelology and demonology.

It must be kept in mind here that this study is making a distinction between cosmology and theology. Cosmology has to do with the specifics of how the transcendent acts on the world while theology is the umbrella under which the many disciplines about the transcendent are included.⁷

The Importance of Cosmology

That cosmology always has been important in religion mythology has been established at length by Mircea Eliade.⁸ One outstanding characteristic of ancient religions is the close connection between a belief in the gods and their activity among men.⁹ However, cosmological considerations in religion are not to be relegated only to ancient times as science tells us. Contemporary religion also has to consider cosmology. As one modern writer has stated:

Common to the sciences and the humanities [including religion] is the human urge to understand the universe, and man's connection to it. The failures that have pockmarked history have come at times of philosophical poverty.¹⁰

One of the reasons we need a suitable cosmology is that, without it, it is nearly impossible to have a convincing doctrine of salvation. Severed from a consciousness of God working in history, it becomes difficult to believe in a personal God who is interested enough in his creation to provide salvation from sin.¹¹ Thus, it is imperative for the modern-day Church to have a correct cosmology, for without it the church has no message of hope to share with the world.

Secondly, eschatology is woven together with cosmology. Es-

chatology, by its very definition, includes the thought that the drama of life has a universal, cosmic character.¹² The catastrophic end, that is so characteristic of it, usually is brought about by supernatural, divine or demonic powers.¹³ Again, without a correct concept of cosmology, the church will not be able to express its hope in a better world that is coming to those who are seeking for meaning in this life.

Christianity traditionally has held a high view of cosmology, particularly, as has already been mentioned, in its soteriological and eschatological outlook. This has been especially true of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with its belief in "the Great Controversy" theme—the idea that evil (Satan) is warring against good (God) and that, ultimately, God will win. Thus, Adventists should have a great interest in understanding Biblical cosmology, especially in the light of the "Great Controversy" theme as put forth by Ellen G. White.¹⁴

However, some question whether this cosmological theme of the great controversy should be retained in Adventism. Various arguments are introduced in an attempt to support excluding it from Adventist theology. Among the arguments listed are that it is not scientific; it is not a modern world view; it comes from borrowed ideas of antiquity; and it is something found only in Ellen G. White. The conclusion reached is that it is no longer relevant to the modern person to whom we are attempting to address the gospel.¹⁵

The purpose of this paper is to examine one of the aspects of the Scriptural foundations for the great controversy theme, especially as found in Paul's expression of it in Ephesians and Colossians, and particularly in light of its relevancy for our modern scientific world.¹⁶ Because some have posited that Paul is greatly indebted to the sources available to him in his day,¹⁷ our study will be undertaken from the perspective of the question of Paul's use of the major cosmological sources available to him and his relation to them.

Pauline Cosmology

The Question of Sources. There have been a number of sources cited by scholars which they hold provide for the background of Pauline cosmology. These include Graeco-Roman common religion,

Graeco-Roman philosophy, Philo and Pseudo-Philo, Jewish Rabbinic writings, Jewish apocalyptic, apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS).¹⁸ These writings from Paul's era show a remarkable similarity in many respects. This is especially true of certain cosmological ideas, where oftentimes, the beliefs overlap.

All of the writings indicate a widespread belief in a transcendent Being or Principle. For the philosophers, this entity was reason, rationality, or scientific principle.¹⁹ For most of the believers of the common religion, it was Zeus, who was a father for all mankind.²⁰ In Jewish writings, the transcendent being was God, who was also seen as the Father of mankind.²¹

The concept that heavenly forces effected earthly events is found in most of the writings of Paul's contemporaries. In the Graeco-Roman religion this concept is most forcefully illustrated by Mt. Olympus, which was seen as the connecting link between heaven and earth.²² In Rabbinic writings, heaven was seen to have contact with earth in a number of ways, especially that of the *bath gol*, the heavenly voice that God used to speak to humans.²³ The DSS view angels as beings from heaven who will fight alongside men on earth in the final battle against evil.²⁴ In apocalyptic, apocryphal, and pseudepigraphical literature, angels interact with humans by bringing answers to prayer.²⁵

Another point of contact between the various writings of that period, with the marked exception of the philosophers, was the idea that good and evil powers existed as personal entities in the universe. These powers usually were invisible, but could reveal themselves to men, taking any form necessary to do so. The angels, or demons, as in the case of the Graeco-Roman common religion, usually were divided into groups or classes. The class of the angel or demon determined its function.²⁶ This was particularly true of Jewish apocalyptic writings.²⁷

One of the most pervasive concepts, with the possible exception of the Rabbinic literature, was that of the angels as intermediaries between God and humans. They often were messengers from God or the gods to teach individuals his or their will. They also were sent to help men know the future.²⁸ The belief in the existence of evil beings (often called demons) is characteristic of all of the

literature of the period. Demons primarily were seen as malevolent creatures who caused misfortune, disease, drought, and death.²⁹ Both the apocalyptic literature and the Greek common religion believed that these demons could be controlled by magic or herbs.³⁰

Although these writings contain many similarities, we must not forget that there were major differences between them. For example, one of the major disagreements between Jewish religion and the Greek philosophers lie in their respective views of creation. For the philosophers, the world was created by an intermediary being such as the Demiurge, not by a transcendent Being, because a transcendent Being would have nothing to do with the material world.³¹

The Jewish writings, with the exception of Philo and his doctrine of the *Logos* as creator,³² retained the notion that God personally created the world.³³ Furthermore, the Jewish view of how God operated in the world was in marked contrast to the way in which Graeco-Roman common religion understood its gods. For Jewish writers, by and large, God was intensely and personally interested in His creation, although one does see evidences of God receding into a remoteness in the DSS and apocalyptic literature. However, God fundamentally was different from man. He was not subject to the kind of whims and passions that they were. Therefore, God could be trusted.³⁴

On the other hand, the Greeks viewed their gods as operating with the same passions as human beings. Consequently, the Greeks never could quite trust their gods because those gods were capricious and subject to acting in accordance with their passions, sometimes unfairly. For the Greeks, the gods were an extension of themselves; whereas for the Jews, God was wholly other than and completely different from humans.³⁵

This then, was the general religious milieu of the time period. Each particular writing had its own slant and focus for its cosmological beliefs. It was this religious milieu in which Pauline cosmological ideas were expressed.

Paul and His Writings. Paul can be considered to be a unique individual in the history of religion. He was brought upon the scene by God at the turning point of the ages (see Gal 1:15, 16). Apparently, he was trained in both the secular schools and the Jewish

religious schools of the time.³⁶ This training would have most certainly brought him into contact with the various cosmological tenets of his day.

The New Testament records one incident in which Paul actually was involved in the disputation of philosophy, at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:16-32). In verse 18 it is stated:

A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. (NIV)

Paul's cosmology, which was based upon a transcendent God who reconciled the world through Jesus Christ, and who, as personal Being, was interested in His creation, was totally opposed to the philosopher's general tenet that the transcendent entity ruling the cosmos was reason. In their view, the true God would have nothing to do with creation or matter. This may have been why Paul was accused of advocating foreign gods. Paul's cosmology announced that there was a God in heaven who cared about men. Thus, Paul opposed the philosophers of his day.

Because Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, he needed to be aware of the thinking of the people he was trying to reach—especially what he taught concerning the triumph of Jesus Christ over the principalities and powers of the world.³⁷ The common view of lesser gods, demons and heroes, was that they inhabited the air and could bring evil upon man by their whim and fancy. Paul used his cosmological concepts to show that life is not controlled by these powers but by God and His angels. Thus, one's life was not governed by fate or other such capricious powers but by the only true God Himself.

Paul shows that God is in control. No power could interfere with God's purposes, which, to the Greek, would have been welcome news. He did not have to constantly live his life in fear that some evil power might come upon him at any time.³⁸

Paul probably knew about the common Graeco-Roman cosmology, and sometimes expressed his cosmology in the popular terminology of Greek religion (see Eph 6:10-17; Col 1:15-21; 2:15-19), but traditional terminology was filled with new meaning in the

light of what God had done on the cross. Paul was trying to convey by his cosmology that something was changed and made new by Christ's death on the cross. Christ triumphed over the powers and was, as he always had been, in control. Therefore, it is doubtful that Paul borrowed his cosmological concepts from common Greek religion. Rather, he used their terminology, filling it with new content, in order that they could relate to the message he was proclaiming.

Although Philo's writings contain some ideas that seem to anticipate Paul, and that there seem to be certain parallels that can be traced in both Paul and Philo, it seems highly unlikely that Paul was dependent on Philo for his cosmological views.³⁹ There are major differences between the two.⁴⁰

With regard to Colossians and Ephesians, they reflect the need to fit Christ into the general religious ideas of the time, whereas Philo is concerned to provide a pedantic explanation of these general ideas.⁴¹ Perhaps it is best to conclude that both writers drew on a common stock of Hellenistic Jewish traditions that were available from the general religious milieu of the times.⁴² Each one, however, uses them in their own ways.

Scholars argue for various parallels between Paul and the rabbis. One such example consists of alleged parallels in the vision of Yohanan b. Zakkai and Paul's experience on the road to Damascus recorded in Acts 9. In Yohanan's dream, the visionaries and their disciples are caught up to the third heaven. This thought seems to parallel Paul's vision recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:2.⁴³ But points of contact do not necessarily mean actual dependence. Pauline thought, especially his cosmology, was reflective of the Christ-event. It also presents an "*an essentially different type of religiousness from any found in Palestinian Jewish literature.*"⁴⁴ Paul, who had been brought up a Pharisee, apparently left it behind when he turned to follow Christ.⁴⁵ It can be concluded, therefore, that Paul was not dependent upon Rabbinic material for his cosmology because his religion, and especially his cosmology, which began and ended in Christ, was something naturally offensive to Rabbinic theology.⁴⁶

Many of the early Jewish eschatological ideas were not present in the Hebrew scriptures, (such as angelology and demonology), but embellished in intertestamental writings.⁴⁷ Studies by R. H.

Charles suggest that Paul seems familiar with some expressions and ideas that appear in the book of Jubilees and other apocryphal works.⁴⁸

For example, Satanil, in 2 Enoch, is seen continuously flying in the air, illustrating a prevalent conception as to the abode of Satan and his angels at the time of Christ and later. The demons and their leaders were conceived to dwell in the air, from where they made their attacks upon men. This reminds us of Ephesians 2:2 and 6:10-17.⁴⁹ That the world is controlled by evil principalities and powers; that men's lives are under the power of Satan and his angels; and that God will ultimately triumph over Satan and establish His kingdom throughout the universe are common themes in apocalyptic, apocryphal, and pseudepigraphic literature. Some of these ideas have similarities to ideas in the Pauline writings.⁵⁰

There is the common belief in Paul's day that wars that take place here on this earth have parallels in wars fought in the heavens. When an angel in heaven gains ascendancy, then the nation on earth does likewise and vice versa.⁵¹ The powers involved are given to the angels of the nations by God's sovereign will. Each angel must be dealt with before a nation can be judged.⁵² These ideas may be the background for Paul's own cosmological statements such as Ephesians 6:10-13, where he states that we fight against spiritual powers in heavenly places, and Colossians 2:15 and 1:20, where Christ is seen to triumph over the powers, reconciling all things to Himself. Evil affects the entire created universe. It assumes cosmic dimensions. Thus all creation awaits redemption.⁵³

There also are various similarities between the Qumran Sect's doctrines and the writings of Paul. Modern scholarship is not certain *how* the theological ideas of the Qumran sect influenced Paul, but thinks there is strong evidence that they *did*. It is claimed that the influence of the sect was more apparent in the later writings of Paul than in the "great" epistles.⁵⁴ The claim has been made that the language of the epistle to the Ephesians was influenced by Jewish-Christian gnosis. In the face of the alleged parallels of Qumran with Pauline theology and language, it is concluded that the language and thought of the epistle to the Ephesians was influenced specifically by the Qumran writings. It has been sug-

gested that the parallels are more numerous and closer than they appear to be from Schlier's work,⁵⁵ going much deeper.⁵⁶

Pauline writings evidence dualistic conceptions and terminology related to what is found in the Qumran writings.⁵⁷ It must be kept in mind that we are not speaking about a dualism of eternal good versus eternal evil, but that evil is warring against good which will eventually triumph and destroy evil. Paul, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, seems to show similarities with the writings of the Qumran sect, specifically those writings with a cosmological bent. For example, Ephesians 6:10-17 reminds us of the *War Scroll* and its cosmology. The war in the *War Scroll* is fought on two levels, the spiritual, and the physical, again an idea found in Pauline cosmology. The DSS's concept of Satan having a limited rule parallels Colossians 2:13-15, where Christ triumphs over the powers and authorities by His death.

The Pauline idea that when one has been created anew by the Holy Spirit he becomes a citizen of heaven and sits in heavenly places now (Eph 2:4-7 for example) finds a similar idea in the sect's theology where the elect are the ones created anew and brought into fellowship with the angels and the heavenly world. The concept of the elemental spirits finds a place in both writings (see 1QH 1:8-15; Gal 4:3, 9; and Col 2:8, 20). Since both Jubilees and 1 Enoch were found in the Qumran literature, it can be suggested that both apocalyptic and the DSS writings have parallels in Paul's writings.⁵⁸

In summary, it seems that Paul used language similar to that of the apocalyptic strand of literature extant in his day. He parallels this literature in many ways. He sees evil angels bent upon destroying the human race and that evil angels surround and are against man; there is a controversy going on that has both physical and psychological dimensions; God exercises control over the evil spirits that are the cause of man's failure to be faithful to the covenant; God ultimately will triumph over evil; and human history is linked closely to celestial events.⁵⁹

Paul's Unique Contribution

Paul used some of the common cosmological terminology of the day to reach both Jew and Gentile. But, he used the language with

a different meaning. For him, Christ became the beginning and end of cosmology, transforming it fundamentally and essentially. Herein lies Paul's contribution to ancient and modern cosmology. The main difference between Paul's writings and the extant writings of his time was the transformation of his cosmology by the Christ-event. All cosmology is measured in respect to the cross, especially in the light of Colossians 1:19, 20 which states:

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness of deity to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (NASB)

Paul explained cosmology as it appeared through the cross, which is the decisive cosmic event that changed history and the various extant cosmologies.⁶⁰ It was Jesus' death and His subsequent resurrection that determines Paul's cosmology. All cosmological thinking must now be measured in terms of the Christ-event, which shows the love of God for human beings and God's activity among and for them. It also discloses that God is in control, not the demons, principalities, or powers.

Conclusion

That Paul spoke about cosmology is abundantly evident. The question remains as to whether what he had to say is relevant today or merely a relic of ancient thought. It can be said that Paul's cosmology and his great controversy theme fit in with the criteria established by Bernard Ramm for evaluating Biblical cosmology; that is: it is free from polytheistic cosmology, it has a general hostility to any atheistic cosmology, and it clearly presents a theistic view of nature and the Bible.⁶¹

Paul seems to have contact with some cosmological insights in his great controversy theme from the surrounding milieu of ideas; however, his cosmology, or great controversy theme, is still relevant for our modern scientific world. It is as relevant as the death of Christ and His resurrection (with its accompanying triumph over the evil powers and principalities) that sinners may be forgiven and brought into a proper relationship with God and receive eternal life. As Biblical salvation still is needed and timely for lost sinners in

today's world, so Paul's cosmology and its great controversy theme continue to have a meaning for the modern mind.

Endnotes

¹ Terry Arries, "Creationism: The Lost Foundation of American Society," *BibSciNews*, (Nov., 1990), p. 1.

² See Gen 1:1 where God created the earth and Rev 22:20-21 where Christ indicates he is coming back soon.

³ The term cosmology has received wide currency for the name of a branch of metaphysics by Christian von Wolff in his *Discursus Praeliminaris de Philosophia in Genere*. See Milton Munitz, "Cosmology," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 2: 237. The word comes from the Greek *kosmos* which has the meaning of world or orderly arrangement. Later, it received the technical sense of a particular world system or way of understanding one's universe. See J. Guhrt, "Kosmos," in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Colin Brown, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-1986), 1: 521, and Emery Bancroft, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, 2nd rev. ed.), p. 64.

⁴ See Paul J. Glenn, *Cosmology* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book, 1939), pp. 2-4.

⁵ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.133 (trans. R. D. Hicks, LCL, 2:237).

⁶ Metaphysics here refers to God as He relates to the origin of the world and His providence ruling the world. See "Metaphysica," in Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 192, 193.

⁷ Cosmology, in the modern sense of the word refers to the world view of a particular age. Christian cosmology as defined in the modern sense of the word by Larry Alderink, "Cosmology," *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983], p. 126) can be expressed as follows: "God acts on the world in bringing into existence and in the world to redeem it, with consequence that the world and its creatures are both the scene of divine activity and the recipients of divine love . . ." One can see the emphasis upon the idea of divine activity in the world of men. See also Alan Richardson, "Cosmology," in *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 76.

Theology, on the other hand, has taken on a more general meaning in modern times. S. W. Sykes ("Theology," in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, p. 566) has aptly pointed out the modern meaning of theology. He states: "In the English-speaking world today, it [theology] would now be widely taken to refer to the rational account given of Christian faith, as furnished by a series of sub-disciplines such as biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, theological ethics, and practical or pastoral theology." Richardson states that "'theology' has become a generic term for a number of interrelated disciplines." It is apparent that there is a relationship between theology and cosmology. This study employs the modern distinction between the terms. Theology is considered as the generic term, the umbrella under which comes cosmology as one of those

interrelated disciplines. Cosmology is used in this study as that part of theology which describes and studies the interaction of divine forces with humanity.

⁸ See Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History* (New York: Harper, 1959); Ernest Harms, "Five Basic Types of Theistic Worlds in the Religions of Man," *Numen* 13 (1966): 208; and James G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 3 vols. London: Macmillan, 1919), especially 1:3-44, for a comparison of the Creation stories of different societies.

⁹ Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1912), p. 103. Astronomy, for them, it must be remembered, served as an introduction to theology. Aristotle states the following about the consideration of the universe in the practice of religion: "Such men should pity for their small-mindedness (consideration of beauty of mountain or other such scenery, or of the plan of a city, etc.) in admiration of ordinary things. . . . They have never contemplated what is the nobler—the Universe and the greatest things of the universe. . ." (*De Mundo* p. 391. a. 20, 25).

¹⁰ Norman Cousins, *The Healing Heart* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1983), p. 145.

¹¹ R. S. Barbour, "Salvation and Cosmology: The Setting of the Epistle of Colossians," *ScotJrTh* 20(1967): 258.

¹² See, for example, Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 1149-1165.

¹³ S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, trans. G. W. Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), p. 126.

¹⁴ *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View: CA, 1950 ed.). The subtitle of this particular work emphasizes the cosmological warfare between earth and heaven. The full title reads: *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation*.

¹⁵ Ariel Roth, Director of the Geoscience Research Institute, recently wrote concerning creation, which is a part of cosmology, "Unfortunately, the same pressures that have caused other churches to allegorize the biblical account of beginnings are upon us. Some among us [SDA] wonder if the current scientific concepts of long ages should not take precedence over the biblical model of beginnings." *Adventist Review*, 9 July 1990, p. 6. See also Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), pp. 65-69 for a discussion on the state of Biblical cosmology.

¹⁶ See for example Eph 1:10; 2:4-10; 3:8-12; 6:10-20; and Col 1:15-23; and 2:8-15. Compare these statements with Rom 8:18-39. A word is necessary here about the issue of the authorship of Ephesians and Colossians. Many hold that these books were not written by Paul but by a disciple of Paul. For the relevant discussion, see for example D. J. Rowston, "Changes in Biblical Interpretation Today; The Example of Ephesians," *BibThJ* 9 (1979): 121-125; J. B. Pohill, "An Introduction to Ephesians," *RevEx* 76 (1979): 465-479; Idem, "The Relationship between Ephesians and Colossians," *RevEx* 70 (1973): 439-450; and F. D. Howard, "An Introduction to Ephesians," *SWJTh* 22 (1979): 7-23. In the latter, Howard has demonstrated that the Pauline authorship was not questioned until the 19th century, with the Greek manuscripts including it in the Pauline corpus. This author has accepted the authenticity of the book on the basis of stylistic similarities with other Pauline works, thematic parallels with other Pauline writings, and the complexity of thought appearing in Ephesians.

¹⁷ For example, see Heinrich Schlier, *Principalities and Powers in the New*

Testament (London: Nelson, 1961) concerning how some think Paul's cosmology is related to Hellenistic ideas. See R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1951-1955), 1: 178, for how some think Paul's cosmology is related to or based on Gnosticism.

¹⁸ For further explanation, see Bruce Norman, "Some Cosmologies of the Mediterranean World in the Time of Paul," M. A. Thesis, Andrews University, 1986.

¹⁹ E. O. James, *Creation and Cosmology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 84; Martin P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 281; and F. C. Grant, *Roman Hellenism and the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1962), p. 45. It seems that astrology with its emphasis upon scientific method provided the link between the common religion and the philosophical schools of thought during this period. For further study, see Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 1: 376-378.

²⁰ Martin P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 71-78. It must be kept in mind that Zeus was an Olympian or uranian god, i.e. a god who belonged to the heavenly sphere in contradistinction to the chthonian or earthly gods, who were not to be confused. See W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London: Methuen, 1954), pp. 206-209. In Greek thought, the heavenly gods were supernatural beings who were very much like men and indulged in the same passions that men did. This gave to the Greeks an awareness of a close kinship between the human and divine. See F. M. Cornford, "The Pattern of Ionian Cosmogony," in *Theories of the Universe*, edited by Milton Munitz (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. 29.

²¹ The Jewish writings, by and large, simply asserted, in accordance with Scripture, that God exists, created, and rules the world, and is generally interested in his children upon earth. Note here that God is involved with the world and not separate from it as the Greeks held. See for example, Helmer Ringgren, *Faith of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), esp. p. 52; C. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 80-91; George F. More, *Judaism*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), 1: 401; and R. T. Herford, *The Pharisees* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), esp. pp. 151-153. Regarding Philo's view of God, see P. Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, edited by Michael Stone, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2: 273.

²² Guthrie, *Greeks*, pp. 206-209.

²³ Rowland, *Open Heaven*, p. 275.

²⁴ 1 QM 12.15.1-5 and Batya Rabin and Chaim Rabin, "The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness," in *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, edited by Yigael Yadin (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 237.

²⁵ Raymond Surburg, *Introduction to the Intertestamental Period* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), p. 61 and Harold Kuhn, "The Angelology of Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalypses," *JBL* 67 (1948): pp. 217-232, esp. 226.

²⁶ H. J. Rose, *Ancient Greek Religion* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1946), pp. 28, 137.

²⁷ 1 Enoch 61:10; 71:7, Jubilees 2:2, 2 Baruch 59:11, Surburg, 62, and D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 241.

28 Jubilees 3:15; 12:22-28; 16:1-4; 4:6, 21; 10:9-10; 15:31; 35:17; and 48:4, 13. See also O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 47.

29 T. F. Glasson, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology* (London: SPCK, 1961), 92; James Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 66; and Rose, p. 28.

30 Jubilees 10:10-14; Lewis Farnell, *Outline History of Greek Religion* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1921), p. 150; and Bruce Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 157.

31 Diogenes, *Lives* 3.76-77; *Timaeus* 42-43; and W. K. C. Guthrie, "The Pre-Socratic World Picture," *HTR* 45 (1952): 87-104.

32 H. Chadwick, "Philo," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 144; Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), pp. 18, 19; Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), esp. p. 149; and Norman, *Cosmologies*, pp. 50, 51.

33 Donald Gowan, *Bridge Between the Testaments* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Pickwick Press, 1976), pp. 229, 230.

34 J. Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (New York: Hermon Press, 1969), pp. 278-297; Hereford, p. 151; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, p. 275; and Charlesworth, *Old Testament*, p. 66. In regard to the receding of God into remoteness in the DSS and Jewish apocalyptic, see Metzger, *Introduction*, p. 61 and Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1: 231.

35 Cornford, p. 29. The gods indulged in many of the passions of men such as jealousy, hate, love, and violent deeds. In fact, the only difference between men and the gods is that the gods were immortal. See Cumont, p. 105.

36 For evidence of the secular training, see Acts 17:16-32 and Titus 1:12. In Acts 17, we find Paul able to argue with the Epicureans and Stoics. In order to do so, he must have known their basic tenets. Paul, in this passage, quotes from their poets. In Titus, Paul once again quotes one of the Cretan poets, a strong evidence that he had a knowledge of secular classics. For the evidence of his religious training, see Acts 22:3. Here, he claims to have studied at the feet of Gamaliel I, who tradition assigns as the successor of Hillel as head of his school. See F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 50.

37 See Gal 2:7,8 and Acts 9:15 as examples of the fact that Paul was called to preach to the Gentiles, that is the men and women of the Graeco-Roman world.

38 William Fairweather, *Jesus and the Greeks* (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1924), 117-118 and Arnold Ehrhardt, "Creation ex Nihilo," *StTh* 4 (1951): 19.

39 Chadwick, "Philo," p. 157 and Fairweather, p. 210. See for example 1 Cor. 4:9 where Paul uses the cosmological terminology describing the earth as the theater (*theatron*) of the universe. Philo uses this same terminology in *Gig.* 7.31.1-3, "For the souls that are free from the flesh and body spend their days in the theater (*theatro*) of the universe and with a joy that none can hinder." This is but one of the examples of similarity between Paul and Philo.

40 Chadwick, "St. Paul," p. 306.

41 Sandmel, p. 149.

42 Chadwick, "St. Paul," p. 290.

43 J. Bowker, "'Merkabah' Visions and the Visions of Paul," *JrSemSt* 2 (1971): 169-173. See E. P. Sanders, "Patterns of Religion in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: A Holistic Method of Comparison," *HTR* 66 (1973): 458.

44 E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 543.

45 Hereford, p. 198.

46 We must keep in mind here the *birkat ha-minim*, the nineteenth blessing concerning heretics added to the eighteen blessings prayed daily, which was written sometime around 100 A.D. and was directed against Judeo-Christian and Gnostic sects. In order to avoid any suspicion of collaborating with Christianity, this prayer had to be recited in public worship. See Meir Ydit, "Birkat Ha-Minim," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, edited by Cecil Roth and Geoffrey Wigoder, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 4: 1035-1036. For the English and Hebrew text, see C. W. Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue on the Divine Office* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 114-127. Note that the *birkat ha-minim* appears in the 12th blessing.

47 Joshua Bloch, *On the Apocalyptic in Judaism* (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning), p. 44.

48 R. H. Charles, "The Book of Jubilees," pp. xxxiii-lxxxv, as found in Wintermute, 2: 49. Among the several New Testament writers, Paul and James seem to display the greatest number of coincidences with the Apocrypha. See Metzger, pp. 158-162, especially 162.

49 Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology* (London: Epworth Press, 1949), p. 143.

50 For example, see Eph 1:10; 6:10-17; Col 1:15-20; 2:15-23; Rom 8:18-39. See also D. S. Russell, *Method*, p. 238.

51 Russell, *Method*, pp. 244, 245 and Glasson, p. 70.

52 Russell, *Method*, pp. 244, 245.

53 Russell, *Apocalyptic*, p. 36.

54 J. A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), p. 201.

55 See Heinrich Schlier, *Principalities and Powers in the New Testament* (London: Nelson, 1961).

56 Karl G. Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," as found in J. Murphy-O'Connor, ed., *Paul and Qumran* (Chicago: The Priory Press, 1968), pp. 116, 117.

57 D. Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, edited by Michael Stone, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2: 535-536. As an example of this thinking, one might examine the use of the term "elemental spirits" as used in *IQH* 1.8-15 and its corresponding uses in Paul (see for example Gal 4:3, 9; Col 2:8, 20). They both allude to the elemental spirits, the spirits appointed by God to rule over the elements and natural phenomena in accordance with God's will and the plan which He has established. See Ringgren, p. 57. For a listing of the parallels of Pauline texts with the Qumran literature, see Roland Murphy, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament Comparisons," *CBQ* 18 (1956): 263-272.

58 Russell, *Method*, p. 237 and J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch-Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), esp. pp. 59-69.

59 A sampling of these ideas can be found in Ephesians and Colossians, in Romans 8, and in 1 Corinthians 4:9, 10.

- 60 George Maloney, *The Cosmic Christ* (New York: Sheed and Ward), pp. 18, 19.
- 61 Ramm, p. 69.

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WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? (Galatians 1:6-10)

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What a way to begin a letter! With a rebuke? The apostle wastes no time with flattery. The issue is too crucial. His concern is with the heart of the Christian faith, the "gospel"—with its nature, with its preaching.

The nature of the gospel had been challenged; its preaching perverted. That riled Paul's mind and soul as nothing else could. He was quick to respond, and his passion for the gospel runs through every sentence. There are those who believe that this letter saved Christianity from degenerating into a form of paganism. If so, does it not need to do so again?

The words are sober, hard. But even so, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can sense the profundity of God's love in them—love for the truth of the gospel; love for those who will hear the gospel and be saved by its power.

Confusion, perversion, desertion, came early in the life of the Christian church. It came so soon that it astonished the apostle Paul, that great preacher of justification by grace through faith.

Here is a dramatic example of how we should respond when the nature of the gospel is threatened and the preaching of it perverted. We ought to get passionate about the nature of the gospel, about it being preached in the right way, because it is the heart and center of faith.

In Galatians 3:1-5, the perversion of the gospel that riled Paul