The Eschatology of Colossians and Ephesians

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ABSTRACT
It is often held by scholars that the main difference between the undisputed Pauline letters on the one hand, and Colossians and Ephesians on the other, is the lack of (futurist) eschatology in the latter two. This theory is refuted. The metaphor of rising and living together with Christ and the metaphor of the powers which have been subjected to Christ, which are essential elements in this theory, are discussed. It is argued that the function of these metaphors is not to express a realised eschatology, but to supply an authentic response to the author’s perception of the life situations of the anticipated readers of these two letters.

INTRODUCTION
Although respected New Testament scholars such as Schnackenburg (1952:160), Mussner (1955:94), Schlier (1968:72,392) and Barth (1974:239–250) remain convinced that futurist eschatology plays a definite role in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, the majority of present-day critical scholars is of the opinion that futurist eschatology in these two letters is limited to traditional set formulae, and that the two documents reflect an understanding of eschatology which is decisively that of "realised eschatology", particularly in the case of Ephesians. In both letters their realised eschatology corresponds with their understanding of salvation, where their emphasis is on salvation which has already been accomplished in the Christ event. This opinion is held by Bultmann (1954:465ff.) and Bornkamm (1961:61) in the case of Colossians, and Kirby (1968:61) in the case of Ephesians.

It is noteworthy that Catholic scholars are either less sure that the eschatology of Ephesians and Colossians has been radically realised, or less concerned whether or not it is the case. This is no coincidence. Critical Protestant scholars’ observation of a loss of futurist eschatology in Colossians (and especially in Ephesians)
corresponds with their opinion that in these two "deutero-Pauline" letters the Pauline emphasis on Christology and eschatology has shifted to ecclesiology. Catholic theologians would not find such a shift disturbing, but a natural development (Ernst 1976: 125f.). For sensitive Protestants, however, it smacks of a creeping church triumphalism. Among New Testament scholars consensus has been reached that (futurist) eschatology was a determining factor in Paul's undisputed letters. When critical Protestants discover in Colossians and Ephesians a theology which, to their understanding, was a development after the time of Paul, in the direction of an early catholic ecclesiology, they are tempted to interpret the less explicit futurist eschatology in Ephesians and Colossians as part of a process of replacing the fervent expectation of the kingdom of God with an early catholic church triumphalism. For that reason Beare (1953:607) called Ephesians "the first manifesto of Christian imperialism". The name which has come to be most closely linked to this interpretation of Ephesians and Colossians as a retrogressive "early catholic" development is that of the radical Lutheran from the Bultmann school - Ernst Käsemann. He singled Ephesians out as the document which reflects a loss of eschatological tension and consequently an over-emphasis on ecclesiology. In Ephesians, "the classical document of the church" (Käsemann 1972:170), even Christology becomes a function of ecclesiology (Käsemann 1964: 254).

The above mentioned remarks clearly show the importance of an examination of the role of eschatology in Ephesians and Colossians. It is not simply a question of whether one aspect of Pauline theology is lacking in these two letters (leaving aside the question of authorship). If it can be proved that (futurist) eschatology plays no part in Ephesians and Colossians, it will be tantamount to saying that these two letters diverge significantly from the essence of Pauline theology, despite some superficial, terminological similarities. The arguments of those who hold Colossians and Ephesians to be de-eschatologised documents are expanded in sections 1-4.
1 RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION IN CHRIST: REALISED ESCHATOLOGY

1.0 Argument

The gist of this argument, which is based on Colossians 2:12, 3:21 and Ephesians 2:5f., is that in these documents it is said that, in Christ, believers are already "made alive", "raised up", and seated in "heavenly places" - events which, according to the undisputed letters of Paul, will only take place at the second coming of Christ. According to the undisputed letters, these events form part of the eschatological drama, and believers look forward to it through eyes of faith. Romans 6:8 declares "... we believe that we shall also live with him". The "deutero-Pauline" Ephesians and Colossians, claims that the \textit{eschaton} has already arrived: eschatology is therefore realised eschatology. The following are the relevant passages:

In Colossians 2:11-13 the readers are assured that they "were buried with him in baptism". The same assurance is found in Romans 6:4, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death".

Both Colossians 2 and Romans 6 agree that the consequence of Christ's resurrection is the resurrection of believers. The difference between them is that Colossians speaks of the resurrection in the aorist tense ("you were also raised with him"), while Romans 6:4 uses the future ("we too might walk in the newness of life"). In the same way the past event of Colossians 2:13 ("you ... God made alive together with him") contrasts with the future event of Romans 6:8, "we believe that we shall also live with him".

Ephesians 2:5 is similarly interpreted by Lindemann (1975:120; Conzelmann 1976:234): "But God ... made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus". The life which the undisputed letters were still expecting, has already been realised in Ephesians (Lindemann 1975:120).

To summarise the argument: the undisputed letters use the metaphors of the cross and death of Christ to describe the accomplished aspect of salvation, but reserve the metaphor of the
resurrection for the future aspect of salvation. The believers have
died with Christ and have thus been "freed from sin" (Rm. 6:7).
They are already "justified" but will only be "saved" at the second
coming. The "real" Paul of the undisputed letters only once uses
sōzō in the past tense, in Romans 8:24 - but qualifies his state­
ment immediately by adding "in hope". Colossians and Ephesians,
however, do not only use the metaphor of the cross to describe the
present aspect of salvation, but also the metaphor of resurrection
(Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:5,8) and even that of ascension (Eph. 2:6; Col.
1:13).

Let us now assess this argument.

1.1 Assessment of argument 1
The argument of Lindemann and others is based on the assump­
tion that there is a certain rationale in the selection of soteriologi­
cal metaphors and verbs by Paul and the author(s) of Colos­
sians/Ephesians. According to this rationale, a deliberate distinc­
tion was made - both by Paul and Colossians/Ephesians - between
weaker and stronger metaphors, and between weaker and stronger
verbs. The weaker metaphor was that of dying with Christ, the
stronger metaphors that of rising and living with Christ~ the
weaker verbs were dikaiō or agorazō, the stronger verb was sōzō.
Both Paul and Colossians/Ephesians used the stronger metaphors
and verb to describe a higher soteriological state, arrived at only
at the eschaton. Paul reserved this higher soteriological state for
the future. Colossians/Ephesians lacked this "eschatological
reserve". For them, "being saved", "being raised up in Christ and
seated in heaven" was something which had already happened.
Therefore they applied the stronger metaphor of rising and living
with Christ and the verb sōzō to describe the higher soteriological
state as a position which has already been arrived at.
But - is this assumption correct? Let us first turn to the Paul we
know from his undisputed letters.

Is the future form of the rising and living with Christ meta­
phor in Romans 6:5,8 a deliberate choice? Did Paul try to convey
to his readers the conviction that the believers will only "live with
Christ" after the second coming? Not necessarily. It may be that
the future forms of Romans 6:5,8 are merely logical future forms
(Schneider 1952:47) which are concerned with the present life
(Cranfield 1975:47). Verse 8, ("we shall ... live with him") is
closely related to verse 11 ("So you also must consider yourselves ... alive to God in Christ"), which is an admonition for the here and now. The future tenses serve to express Paul's notion that walking with Christ is not an accomplished fact, and that the new life with Christ does not become the believer's possession, but is realised through a continual surrender of one's present activity to God.

Can we say that Paul distinguished between soteriological metaphors, reserving the stronger metaphor of rising and living with Christ to describe a higher, soteriological state, arrived at only after the parousia? Paul used soteriological metaphors with a remarkable freedom. According to Theissen (1974:284), the intention and scope of Paul's soteriology cannot be confined to one metaphor or symbolism, but covers "a network of symbolisms". In describing salvation ("Heil"), Paul made clear that there is a present, realised aspect of salvation, as well as a future, still outstanding aspect, which will only be realised at the Eschaton. The present, realised aspect was, for instance, expressed by the metaphors of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), of social reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18), of forensic justification Rom. 3:21f.), of liberation from slavery (Gal. 3:13), of putting a seal on believers (2 Cor. 1:21f.). The future aspect was expressed by the rising and living metaphor. However, there is nothing in his use of the latter that suggests that Paul regarded it as a technical term that should be used in the future tense only. Nowhere did Paul indicate that this metaphor should be reserved for the higher soteriological status achieved only after the Eschaton. Paul's abundant use of different metaphors rather suggests a lack of systematic classification of metaphors. The metaphor of adoption as sons is used in Romans 8:23 to describe the future eschatological salvation, but also the present, realised aspect in Galatians 4:6. In Romans 8:30, Paul uses the verb ἀναστάσεως, with its strong eschatological connotation, almost as a synonym for δικαιοσύνη. Both verbs are in the aorist, thereby disproving the notion that Paul would never apply eschatological terms in the aorist. But what about the claim that Paul used σώζω only in the future tense? Did Paul distinguish between σώζω and ἀναστάσεως? He showed a preference for δικαιοσύνη when speaking about the present status of a redeemed sinner, but that does not necessarily mean that he regarded σώζω as a special verb reserved to express the full glory of the eschatological state.
In the usage of \textit{sōzō} in 1 Thessalonians 2:16: "speaking to the Gentiles that they may be saved", there is nothing to suggest that Paul is thinking about the final eschatological salvation. What he says is merely, "speaking to the Gentiles that they may come to faith in Jesus" - which will take place in the present. The refusal of some in 2 Thessalonians 2:10 to accept the truth of the gospel "and so be saved" also takes place in the time before the \textit{eschaton}, before the revelation of the "lawless man". In 1 Corinthians 15:2 Paul reminds his readers of the gospel which he preached to them - "by which you were saved". Again the obvious meaning is "being saved when you accepted the gospel". In 1 Corinthians 1:21 ("we preach to save those who believe"), \textit{sōsai} refers to the future but not the \textit{eschaton}. These three references suggest that Paul did not consider \textit{sōzō} as a technical term describing a "higher" soteriological state only arrived at after the final \textit{eschaton}.

We should therefore conclude that there is no compelling reason to believe that Paul deliberately made the distinction between the "dying with Christ" metaphor and the verb \textit{dikaiōō} (describing the present, realised aspect of salvation), and the "rising and living with Christ" metaphor and the verb \textit{sōzō} (reserved for the future, final and eschatological salvation).

What about Colossians and Ephesians?

Even if it could be proved that Paul would never have used the "high" ascension metaphor for the present aspect of salvation, it does not necessarily mean that the authors of Colossians and Ephesians (who, for the sake of the argument, we assume were not Paul) shared this Pauline idiosyncrasy. To be sure, in the light of the differences in language and style, it seems quite natural to expect that Colossians/Ephesians would not make the same subtle distinctions Paul made between \textit{sōzō} and \textit{dikaiōō}, between "dying with Christ" and "rising and living with Christ". And yet this is the basic assumption of those who detect a de-eschatologising, catholicising tendency in Colossians and Ephesians. Lindemann (1975:120f.) assumes that their different usage of metaphors is tantamount to a deliberate attempt to formulate their soteriology and eschatology differently from that of Paul.

That seems to be a wrong assumption. Those detecting a deviation from Pauline soteriology and eschatology in the different use of the rising and living metaphors by Colossians/Ephesians, seem to lose sight of the fact that the expressions "made alive together
with Christ" and "made us sit in heavenly places" are indeed metaphors. For instance, it seems that Lindemann forgets this when he says (1975:120), "Our zōē, which is still expected by Paul (Rm. 6:8), is en Christō already realised; and in this context is understood quite undialectically (ganz undialektisch)". "Undialectically" here can only mean "not figuratively", "not metaphorically", that is, literally. Lindemann is saying that in Ephesians this expression is used not only to describe the believers' faith that their sins are forgiven and before God they are now regarded as righteous. In Ephesians "made alive with Christ" describes a reality. According to Lindemann, Ephesians regards believers to be made alive in a mystical, gnostic way through baptism.

Is such a mystical interpretation correct?

I believe not. In Colossians, the expression "made alive together with Christ" means nothing more than what is described in terms of justification in the undisputed letters. In Colossians 2:12 "you were raised with him" is immediately qualified by "through faith", and in verse 13 "made alive together with him" is qualified by the sentence "having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross". Thus, the believer is made alive in terms of judicial acquittal - which reminds us of Paul's forensic language in Romans 3. In Colossians 3:1, "you have been raised with Christ" is explained in verses 3f., "For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ ... When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" - an irrefutable reference to the parousia. In Colossians, therefore, these metaphors do not describe an ahistorical, gnostic transformation as a substitute for an eschatological salvation. Their function is to express the present aspect of salvation, without denying the future eschatological salvation. In Colossians they function in the same way as kainē kinesis in 2 Corinthians 5:17, or the phrase "they are justified by his grace" in Romans 3:24.

Ephesians is even more liable to be judged gnostic, ahistorical and de-eschatologised than Colossians. However, if we examine the relevant expressions in Ephesians 2, we see that there is no ground for a gnostic interpretation. In verse 5, "made us alive together with Christ" is immediately followed by the words "by grace you have been saved", an expression so characteristically Pauline that the gnostic interpreters have to explain it away as an editorial correction. Conzelmann (1976:39) formulates the realised
eschatology of Colossians and Ephesians as follows, "Rettung ist Versetzung aus der Spräche ... und diese Versetzung haben wir bereits hinter uns; wir leben schon im Himmel". However, the fact that paraenesis forms such an integral part in both Colossians and Ephesians suggests all too clearly that the author(s) were very much aware that their readers were still on earth, and were faced with worldly temptations. Just three verses after the readers are said to be seated with Christ "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6), they are admonished to do good works.

Much is made of the perfect forms of sózo in Ephesians 2:5,8. Was the choice of sózo, "where Paul would have used dikaióó" (Gnilka 1977:129), a deliberate decision in order to express a different soteriology and eschatology? Gnilka is impressed by the difference, because "nicht die Rechtfertigung, sondern die Rettung steht im Blickfeld". But if sozo is used as a synonym for dikaióó, this argument is invalid. When the phrase chárîti este sesósménoi (Eph. 2:5 and 8) is seen in its context, the resemblance to Paul's usage of justification is obvious. Verses 5 and 8 are explained by verse 9, "... this is not your doing, it is the gift of God - not because of works, lest any man should boast". This has a distinctly Pauline ring. The argument of Gnilka is based on the assumption that sózo conveys something different from dikaióó, something stronger, higher, more sublime. Such an assumption is based on a conviction that the "root meanings" of sózo and dikaióó differ. The context of Ephesians 2 shows that this is not the case; the two verbs describe the same soteriological process, though from different perspectives.

We have to conclude, therefore, that neither the usage of sózo, nor the "rising and living with Christ" metaphor, to describe the present aspect of salvation constitutes a different (more realised) eschatology than that of the undisputed letters.

2 ACCORDING TO COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS THE COSMIC POWERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBJECTED

2.0 Argument
It is said by Steinmetz (1969:75) that, whereas the final subjection of cosmic powers is portrayed by the undisputed letters as something which will take place at the éschaton (1 Cor. 15:24; Rm. 8:20; Phlp. 2), in Colossians and Ephesians their subjection is a
consequence of Christ's exaltation. In Ephesians 1:21-22, Christ is portrayed as seated at the right hand of the Father, "above every name ... all things under his feet ...". The same theme is echoed in Ephesians 1:10, Colossians 1:20 and 2:15, "He [God] disarmed the principalities and powers". In Ephesians, the destruction of the cosmic powers does not take place at the parousia, but at the exaltation of Christ (Lindemann 1975:209).

2.1 Assessment of argument 2
This argument is based on the same fallacy as the previous one: it fails to take into consideration that the statements of Colossians/Ephesians about the subjection of the cosmic powers are metaphorical language. It understands the statements "above pasēs archēs kai exousias" (Eph. 1:21) and "he who is the head of pasēs archēs kai exousias" (Col.2:10) not as metaphors but as literal statements of fact. They are understood to express the thought that Christ is above while the powers are under his feet, being finally subjected. However, once it is understood that these expressions are metaphors, it is evident that they might be intended to express something else - for example, the conviction that through the death and resurrection of Christ a decisive victory has been won over the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile (Ephesians) and over the elemental spirits of the universe (Colossians).

Do Colossians and Ephesians reflect an understanding of reality according to which the cosmic powers of evil have already and finally been demolished? Certainly not. Had such a gnostic understanding of reality been held, there would be no references to sin, no paraenesis in the two letters - because the powers of evil would already have been bound. But that was not the case - note the paraenesis in Colossians 3. Ephesians 6:12 warned explicitly against the still operating cosmic powers: "Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against ... the principalities (tās archās), against the powers (tās exousias), against the world rulers of this present darkness". So, when Ephesians speaks of the cosmic powers already subjected, it does not suggest that the final eschatological battle has already been fought and won; the function of the subjection metaphors is to state clearly that in the Christ event a decisive victory over the divisive powers has been won, and that in the body of Christ, the church, this victory is demonstrated and celebrated.
Even if it is granted that the language of the subjection of powers is metaphorical, the question remains: why is the "present aspect" of salvation, the consequence of the Christ event for the here and now, so strongly emphasised by Colossians and Ephesians?

I believe this question can be answered satisfactorily if we keep in mind that both Colossians and Ephesians are products of communication processes. Exponents of recent developments in literary criticism have pointed out that a text should not be evaluated as the product of the author alone, but as a result of the interaction between author and the readers he addresses. The author wishes to communicate through a text, and he does that with what Wolfgang Iser (1974: 274f.) called "the implied reader". The latter's prejudices, capacity to understand metaphors, and lack (or wealth) of knowledge about the matter the author wishes to communicate, are all factors which influence the production of the text. The focal point of Iser's essays (1974:287) is the process of reading, and how "by reading, we uncover the unformulated part of the text". Our interest in this essay is not the reception but the production of Colossians and Ephesians. Still, if both reception and production are part of a single process, the anticipated reception and the desired effect of the text on the implied readers obviously influence its production. Applying to our own problem, it means that if we are able to draw a relatively true profile of the supposed problems which faced the readers of Colossians and Ephesians, we should be in a better position to understand the profile of the two letters. We should understand better why certain aspects of the Christian message are emphasised and why others are not. We should understand better why in both letters it was stressed that the cosmic powers were subjected by Christ's death and resurrection.

Let us consider Colossians. For the purpose of our argument it is not necessary to know the origins of the Colossian heresy, or to reconstruct it. What is relevant for our argument is how the author perceived this heresy, and how this perception influenced his response to that perceived heresy. There is consensus among scholars that the heresy implied in Colossians was one which gave undue respect to angelic beings or cosmic powers. They were regarded as being in some respects either equal or superior to Christ. Some of Christ's mediating functions were usurped by the
powers. The result was that "completeness" in religious life could only be attained by additional rites and beliefs (Moule 1957:94). In response to this heresy, Colossians assures its readers that in Christ "all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (1:20) and "in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority" (2:9-10). In response to the belief that certain stoicheta, archēs, exousias and angēloi were superior to Christ, Colossians reminds its readers that "by making peace by the blood of his cross" (1:20), Christ subjected these powers. Their subjection is a reflection of the belief, not that the eschaton has already arrived, but that Christ, as a mediator, is sufficient.

If one assumes that Ephesians was a circular letter of some kind, it follows that the matters it addressed, were of general interest, significant to more than one congregation. As will be explained later in more detail, there was one matter which was a bone of contention in almost all of the urban Christian communities in the first century: the relationship between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Many Jewish believers thought that the uncircumcised Gentile believers were inferior and many of these Gentiles consequently felt inferior. The author of Ephesians anticipated such feelings among the recipients of his letter. His response to his implied readers was that in the new community of the Messiah, the church, no such distinction existed any longer; the enmity between Jewish and Gentile believers had been removed; the two groups were welded together in the church. In order to impress on his readers the significance of this new messianic community - the church - Ephesians stated clearly that the church was "his [Christ's] body", the fulness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 2:23).

The reason for the emphasis on realised eschatology in Ephesians - which cannot be denied - is not because Ephesians shares the "Qumran mentality" in which "the local congregation has become the seat of the divine presence" (Gnilka 1977:125), nor because of a self-centred church triumphalism (Käsemann 1972:170) or a "Christian imperialism" (Beare 1953:607), but to remind the readers of the unity that there is already in the new community of the Messiah, the church. When the author portrays
Christ as ruling over the cosmic powers, his intention is not to suggest that the final eschatological battle has already been fought and won, but to assure his readers that their new unity in Christ surpasses any dividing wall between them. The function of the hymnic and lyric statements in Ephesians 1:15-23 is not to convince readers that heaven has already arrived, but to assure them that the Messiah, who rules over every power and is therefore "head over all" is also "head of the church" in which the former enemies, Jew and Gentile, are now bound together (v.22, as translated by Barth 1974:145).

3.0 Argument
In Lindemann's view (1975:49), Ephesians operates not with the usual three-level concept of reality (heaven-earth-world below), but knows only two spheres: "below", where Satan rules (Eph. 2:2), and "above", where Christ is. Influenced by this two-tier concept of reality, Ephesians uses expressions and words, which in the undisputed letters are used to express linear time, to describe spatial categories. The same holds true for Colossians, whose language is still that of the apocalyptic tradition, but expresses something quite different (Bornkamm 1961:58f.). The "hope" of Colossians 1:5,23,27 is a "hope laid up for you in heaven" - "Hoffnungsgut" (Bornkamm 1961:60), _spes sperata_. "Past" and "future" have been replaced by "below" and "above". The most significant example of a time category which in Ephesians and Colossians is employed to express space, is the word _aiōn_. No longer does it simply mean "age", and no longer is it used in the sense of the Jewish doctrine of two ages (_aiōn_ houtos versus _aiōn_ mellōn). In Ephesians 2:2 ("when you were dead ... following the course of this world"), _aiōn_ means a timeless force like _kosmos_, while Ephesians 3:9, 2:7 should likewise be understood.

Another example of "_Die Aufhebung der Zeit_" (the title of Lindemann's dissertation) in Ephesians and Colossians is their use of the _patē ... nun_ contrast. Whereas Paul uses the phrase to contrast the past without Christ with the present position in Christ (Rm. 11:30; Gal. 4:8), in Colossians and Ephesians the contrast...
describe, not two stages in redemptive history, but two existential situations, "die Bereiche des Heiles ... und des Unheiles" (Steinmetz 1969:66). The potè ... nun contrast is used in such a "timeless" manner in Colossians 1:21f., 1:26f., 3:7f. and especially in the central passage in Ephesians, 2:11-22 (Lindemann 1975:155). Lindemann has arrived at such an ahistorical interpretation of those "far" and "near" because of his conviction that Ephesians is a thoroughly gnostic document. The religiösgeschichtliche background of Ephesians is gnosticism; the metaphor of the broken wall is not Jewish but the gnostic division between heaven and earth (Käsemann 1959:517f.; Schlier 1968:133f.). Therefore, Lindemann argues, there can be no question of futurist eschatology in Ephesians. In this letter the linear concept of time has been radically suspended. The author of Ephesians is not concerned with distinctions between past and present - and even less with the eschatological future.

3.1 Assessment of argument 3
The allegation that categories of time are changed to spatial categories can be dealt with briefly. Steinmetz and Lindemann contend that categories such as aiōn, have the same meaning wherever used in Colossians and Ephesians, namely "Zeit-Raum". In doing so they forget that the meaning of a word depends not on its form but on its context (Louw 1982:39). Aiōn is certainly used in a non-temporal way in Ephesians 2:2, but in Colossians 1:26, Ephesians 1:21, 3:9, and 3:21 the term refers to "age" or a period of time. A more serious allegation is that Colossians and Ephesians are documents deeply influenced by gnosticism, and therefore reflect an ahistorical suspension of time. Since this is said especially of Ephesians ("eine Ekklesiologie an sich" - Lindemann 1975:160), my reply will be confined to that letter.

Apart from the methodological problem of an alleged pre-Christian gnosticism, it seems unlikely that the metaphors of Ephesians are drawn from gnosticism. In Ephesians 2:11-22, the metaphor of the "new man" is more likely to come from Judaism; it resembles the metaphor in Galatians 3:28 (Percy 1946:255). The metaphor of the broken wall is most probably drawn from the wall which separated the Outer Court of the Gentiles from the temple proper, where no Gentile could enter (Barth 1974:283; Roberts 1983:65). "Das Gesetz wirkte somit ganz massiv als eine
Heiden und Juden ideel und praktisch trennende Scheidenwand” (Stuhlmacher 1981:237). The belief in the Creator-God Yahweh, the adherence to the Torah and the practice of circumcision as an initiation rite, functioned as the “boundaries” (Meeks 1983:36) of the Jewish community. The metaphor of the Torah as a wall is also found in the Letter of Aristeas (139) and in the Pirqe Aboth 1:1 and 3:18.

Therefore, it seems most appropriate to read Ephesians 2:11-22, and verse 14 in particular, against a Jewish background. We can be more specific: Ephesians 2:11-22 not only referred in general to the new unity between Gentile and Jewish Christians; it alluded to a specific problem in this new community: the status of the uncircumcised Christians. Were they to receive second-class status, similar to that of the so-called, “God-fearing” Gentiles, or were they to be full citizens in the new commonwealth of the Messianic community? Elliott (1982:25f.) points out that pàroikos was used in the Greco-Roman world, "in a technical sociopolitical sense", to denote "a registered stratum of the population which was distinguished legally and socially from the superior full citizens, on the one hand, and the inferior transient strangers, on the other". Before they became Christians, many Gentiles were probably what Acts 10 calls "God-fearers", that is, half-proselytes who were Jews, religiously (because they believed in Yahweh and the Jewish Scriptures), but not socially (because they were not circumcised and therefore not regarded as full Jews by the Jews themselves). The social position of these "God-fearers" was very much like the marginal, in-between position of the pàroikoi, described above by Elliott. The usage of xénoi kai pàroikoi (Eph. 2:19) is very much similar, if not identical, to its general usage in the Greco-Roman world. Ephesians 2:11-22 therefore assures its implied Gentile Christian readers that they no longer occupy the ambiguous position in which they were before: that of a "God-fearer" - neither pagan nor Jew. No longer are they in limbo - in the new community of the Messiah there is no distinction between them and Jewish Christians. They "are no longer xénoi kai pàroikoi, but ... sumpoltai with the saints and members of the household of God" (v.19). The potè ... nun phrase is therefore not used to contrast two ahistorical existential positions, but to contrast the present position of the Gentile Christians with their pre-Christian position.
It is therefore clear that Ephesians was not a gnostic, ahistorical (and therefore non-eschatological) document. On the contrary, it has been shown that Ephesians was written as a response to a very real and universal problem in the first century Christian communities in Asia Minor - the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians. The universality, scope and importance of this matter are evident. If the Jew/God-fearer distinction had been allowed to continue in the new Christian communities, Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect. The immensity of this danger urged the author of Ephesians to emphasise what the readers were already in Christ - made alive and united with one other. The emphasis in Ephesians on the church is not a symptom of an "early Catholic" church triumphalism but an authentic response to the problem which faced Christian congregations in the diaspora in the years AD 60-80, when Ephesians was written.

4 FUTURIST ESCHATOLOGY IN COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS IS ONLY A MARGINAL PHENOMENON

4.0 Argument
Those understanding Colossians and Ephesians as documents reflecting a thoroughly realised eschatology, do not deny that certain passages in these two letters have a futurist eschatological ring. However, these passages should be explained in the light of the overwhelming emphasis on realised eschatology.

Colossians 1:5, "the hope laid up ... in heaven", only reinforces the letter's "hellenistisches Raummetaphysik" (Schulz 1976:89); it is "Hoffnungsgut", (Bornkamm 1961:61f.), "Heilsgut ... das im Himmel bereitliegt" (Conzelmann 1976a:134). Colossians 3:1-4 mentions the parousia, but verse 4 sets the whole section in a spatial framework: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above ...". Colossians 3:24 can be ignored because it appears in a Haustafel, that is in a set formula (Steinmetz 1969:32f.).

Ephesians 4:30: ("... the Holy Spirit ... in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption") is also a quotation from an earlier tradition and may therefore be ignored (Steinmetz 1969:32; Lindemann 1975:200). Ephesians 5:16 is just a warning against the excesses of a "Pneumatikertum" (Steinmetz 1969:35).
Other passages with indirect allusions to the parousia are either ignored or unsatisfactorily explained. Owing to lack of space, they can only be referred to in Colossians 3:24: "... from the Lord you will receive the inheritance"), in Ephesians 1:14,18 (the reference to the Holy Spirit as the "guarantee of our inheritance"), in Ephesians 5:5 (the "kingdom of God"), and in Ephesians 4:13, (Barth 1972:239f.).

4.1 Assessment of argument 4
The rejection of passages with futurist eschatology is based on two arguments.

Firstly, these references often appear in passages which have been taken over from traditional set formulae; consequently, they do not represent Colossians' and Ephesians' own theology. However, together with Theissen (1974:285), we must reject this argument. The assumption behind it is that only an author's own words and expressions are an authentic reflection of his thoughts, not the set formulae which he uses. This view is not valid, because there is no reason why an author would quote - without criticism - material if he is in disagreement with it; even more so if he uses the tradition without acknowledging that he is doing so. This implies that, as far as the author is concerned, there is no distinction and certainly no discrepancy between his own views and that of the material he uses. In understanding Colossians and Ephesians, we should not try to expose the layers of the text, but rather to understand how different elements (including set formulae) function in the text.

Secondly, it is argued that the references to the parousia in Colossians and Ephesians are only marginal phenomena, "traces" of an old-fashioned tradition which, in view of the overwhelming emphasis on realised eschatology, may safely be ignored.

This objection, however, is only valid if one regards Colossians and Ephesians as theological treatises instead of what they are - namely letters. From a theological treatise, like a short compendium of Christian articles of faith, one could expect a reasonable degree of comprehensiveness. If Romans, I Corinthians, Colossians and Ephesians were small summae theologiae, one could reason that there was indeed a theological shift from Romans/I Corinthians to Colossians/Ephesians, because futurist eschatology, which plays an important part in Romans/I Corinthians, is only
briefly mentioned in Colossians/Ephesians. However, these documents are not treatises but letters. They are responses to anticipated historical situations. In case of both Colossians and Ephesians (as pointed out above) the circumstances of their implied readers required a certain emphasis on realised eschatology, on spelling out the implications of Jesus' death and resurrection in the here and now. In Colossians, Christ is shown to be more powerful than the angelic cosmic powers; in Ephesians it is emphasised that "in Christ" believers are made alive and made one. In that perspective, it is understandable why futurist eschatology is not treated extensively in Colossians and Ephesians.

It is illuminating to compare Colossians and Ephesians with Philippians, which has approximately the same length. Although Philippians is generally accepted as a letter from Paul's own hand, futurist eschatology is not a prominent feature of this letter. Only once (Phil.4:5) is it said that "the Lord is at hand". The expression "day of Christ" is used three times, in 1:6, 1:10 and 2:16, each time without a sense of intense eschatological expectation. In Philippians 3:20 we find another direct reference: "But our commonwealth (tò politeuma) is in heaven (en ouranois), and from it we await a Saviour ...". It is interesting, though, to note the "spatial" orientation of this verse. Christ is seated in heaven, where the believers' commonwealth is as well.

The two remaining references in 1:28 and 2:10 (a set formula!), are rather indirect and can be balanced by two other references which seem to reflect a spatial, individualistic eschatology. Philippians 3:14 reads, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God" and Philippians 1:23, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better".

The eschatology of Philippians is not unambiguous. If one examined Philippians with a prejudiced mind, bent on finding in it proof of an exclusive realised eschatology, it would certainly be possible to interpret Philippians just as Lindemann and others have interpreted the eschatology of Colossians and Ephesians.

5 CONCLUSION
There is an undeniable stress on realised eschatology in Colossians and Ephesians. This, however, is not because church triumphalism has taken the place of the expectation of Christ and his coming kingdom. Both letters responded to anticipated situations which
asked for a clear statement about the consequences of Christ’s death and resurrection for the here and now - hence the realised eschatology. The references of futurist eschatology in both letters should be taken as seriously as, for example, the few indications of futurist eschatology in Philippians. Reasons why we should not expect an extensive treatment of futurist eschatology in Colossians and Ephesians have been pointed out above. There is, however, insufficient reason to conclude from the letters themselves that futurist eschatology has been abandoned.

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