CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CERTAIN EXPRESSIONS WHICH HAVE A COSMIC ASPECT OR ARE ANTHROPOLOGICAL IN CHARACTER

1. 'Ἐπουράνιος

Now that the examination into the formal correspondence between Eph. and the other epistles comprising the CPminus has been dealt with, it is time to put the content of our epistle to the test. To begin with, we shall be studying a number of salient words which have a cosmic aspect or are anthropological in character.

Whilst doing this, it will often be necessary to consider images and concepts connected with these words which had other connotations during the first century. Thus for example, we shall be dealing with syncreticism and gnosticism.

It would also be impossible to restrict ourselves exclusively to first century material because to a large extent, these first century images and concepts are accessible only through the medium of later documents. These, although of a later date, incorporate a considerable proportion of older material. This is of specific relevance to, for example, the Greek magical papyri found in Egypt and the Corpus Hermeticum.

Without doubt, the word Ἐπουράνιος is one of the striking words which has a cosmic implication. It occurs on five occasions, each time forming part of the expression ἐν τοῖς Ἐπουρανίοις. Usually, the word conveys that something or someone is in heaven. Used in connection with both astronomical phenomena as well as gods, the word has in the first place a local meaning. This is so in the case of classical Greek as well as the Greek of the LXX and the hellenistic world.²

A qualificatory idea may be attached to the local meaning of the

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2 Cf. Th. W. V, p. 538s. and Liddell-Scott, s.v. A hellenistic example is found in Deissmann, L. v. O. where, p. 220 line 3041s., the great magical papyrus of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, is partly reproduced. Here a demon is addressed: καὶ σὺ λάθησον ὡς οὗτοι ἐὰν τὴν Ἐπουράνιον ἣ ἄρων ἢ τὴν ἑργον ἢ τὴν ὑπόγειον ἢ καταχθὼν, Ἐπουράνιος is here synonymous with ἴδρος ὡς ὑπόγειος is with καταχθὼν.
word; that which is heavenly is superior. This is true also of the Greek of different periods.\(^1\)

Paul uses the word, together with \(\varepsilon\pi\gamma\varepsilon\iota\sigma\) and \(\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\chi\vtheta\omicron\omicron\omicron\sigma\), in the masculine plural in Phil. 2:10 by itself as an indication of locality.\(^2\)

In 1 C. 15:48, it is used in contrast with \(\chi\omega\kappa\omicron\omicron\) and there is a clear qualitative differentiation; the category \(\varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\) is linked with the categories of \(\pi\nu\varepsilon\mu\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\omicron\acute{\i}k\omicron\acute{s}\), \(\dot{\alpha}\theta\omicron\acute{n}\acute{a}t\omicron\sigma\), \(\dot{\alpha}\phi\theta\acute{a}r\tau\omicron\sigma\) and with the \(\beta\alpha\iota\sigma\iota\alpha\iota\overset{\circ}{\iota\sigma}\ \theta\acute{e}o\dot{\sigma}\).

In a number of places in Eph., as in the case of Phil. 2:10, the masculine plural could likewise be kept in mind and \(\varepsilon\nu \tau\omicron\iota\sigma\ \varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\) could be translated as “in the midst of them that are in heaven.”\(^3\)

One difficulty however, is that the personal meaning of the masculine does not fit in with Eph. 3:10. There is no reason whatsoever to suppose that in this instance the archai and the exousiai are being singled out from amongst a great gathering of heavenly dwellers—denoted by \(\varepsilon\nu \tau\omicron\iota\sigma\ \varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\)—as the only group not yet familiar with the wisdom of God.

It is also feasible to regard \(\varepsilon\nu \tau\omicron\iota\sigma\ \varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\) as in incomplete expression which should be augmented by \(\tau\omicron\o\iota\sigma\iota\nu\ \sigma\iota\ \mu\acute{e}\rho\acute{e}\iota\nu\). The substantive is quite often omitted in the case of attributed formed by an adjective when the context leaves little doubt as to which substantive is intended. The substantive \(\mu\acute{e}\rho\acute{os}\) in particular, is often missing.

However, it is not always obvious in Eph. which substantive has been omitted. Whenever the substantive \(\mu\acute{e}\rho\acute{os}\) is missing elsewhere, the subject is concerned with the horizontal plane. Here, on the other hand, it appertains to the vertical plane.\(^4\) Moreover, it is odd that,

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1 A Pindaric fragment speaks of \(\varepsilon\iota\sigma\sigma\backstroke\beta\dot{e}l\omicron\nu\ \varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\ \psi\gamma\chi\alpha\iota\), Philo of \(\varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\) \(\varepsilon\pi\sigma\sigma\backstroke\tau\omicron\iota\mu\acute{a}\iota\sigma\) (cf. Th. W. V, p. 539 lines 7, 8, 20 and Liddell-Scott, s.v.) and the Codex Alexandrinus in 4 Macc. 11:3 of \(\tau\gamma\ \varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\ \delta\i\kappa\eta\). To the Hebrew mind, the local difference between heaven and earth can also go side by side with a qualitative difference; cf. Qoh. 5:1 and Is. 55:9. For late Jewish examples, see Meuzelaar, Der Leib des Mesias, p. 103a.

2 Thus, there is a division of the cosmos into three parts here, as in the Jewish example cited on p. 213 in n. 2. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 223, note 11, speaks of “gelauffige jüdische Kategorien” (fluent Jewish categories).


4 For the omission of the substantive, particularly \(\mu\acute{e}\rho\acute{os}\), see Bl.-Debr., para. 241, p. 150a. M. Pope, Of the heavenly places (Exp. T. 1912, p. 366ss.) argues that \(\tau\omicron\iota\sigma\ \varepsilon\pi\o\upsilon\varphi\alpha\eta\dot{\i}u\acute{n}\iota\sigma\) is neutral and translated this as the heavenly places. To support this, he puts