

The Κόσμος

I. Introduction & Definition

A. Vocabulary

1. κτίσις ^{#2937}: creation (the act, and the product). Used 19x19vv.
2. ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ: (a more or less fixed phrase equivalent to a single lexical item) the totality of God's creation - 'heaven and earth, universe.' 56vv. in the NT have both these words in them.
3. γῆ ^{#1093}: earth, ground, land. Used 250x223vv. Matt. x43; Mark x19; Luke x26; John x13. 13 uses in John is not alot, since it represents only 5.2% of the uses for the word in the NT, and yet the Gospel of John represents 11% of the NT.
4. αἰών ^{#165}: age, period of time. Sometimes translated by the KJV as "world" but is best left to represent the concept of time. Used 122x97vv. (41x27vv. in John's writings—for a total of 33.6% of the uses of this word. John's writings make up only 17.8% of the NT).
5. οἰκουμένη ^{#3625}: the inhabited earth, the whole inhabited world. This is the inhabited earth from the standpoint of humanity—excluding the angelic and fallen angel denizens. Used 15x15vv.
6. κόσμος ^{#2889}: the world, in the order and arrangement of its moral creatures.

B. Uses of κόσμος in the NT (Used 186x151vv.)

1. Matt. 9x9vv; Mark 3x3vv; Luke 3x3vv.; Acts 1x1v.
2. John 105x78vv (John 78x57vv; 1st John 23x27vv; 2nd John 1x1v; Rev. 3x3vv).
3. Paul 47x41vv (Rom. 9x9vv; 1st Cor. 21x17vv; 2nd Cor. 3x3vv; Gal. 3x2vv.; Eph. 3x3vv.; Phil. 1x1v; Col. 4x3vv; 1st Tim. 3x3vv; 0x in 1st & 2nd Thess., Philem., 2nd Tim., Titus).
4. Heb. 5x5vv; Jam. 5x5vv; 1st Pet. 3x3vv; 2nd Pet. 5x4vv.

C. Uses of κόσμος in non-Biblical texts.¹

1. The use of κόσμος for the universe is widespread and goes back to an early period. The idea is that there is an order of things that corresponds to the order of human law. Individual things are at odds, as people engage in disputes, but an immanent cosmic norm holds things together as law does society. The world itself is thus viewed as an ordered society.
2. Plato uses κόσμος in the spatial sense, though with an underlying sense of order. For Plato the κόσμος, manifesting the "idea" in space, is a living creature. Embracing the visible, it reflects what can be known only by reason. An interesting point in Plato, as in other authors, is the merging of the ideas of cosmic space and heavenly space, so that heaven and cosmos tend to be exchangeable terms.
3. Aristotle makes the same equation of heaven and cosmos, but in this connection he is not using heaven in its narrower sense. The cosmos is the totality of things. It is for Aristotle a spherical body with the unmoved spherical earth at its heart. Embracing time and space, the cosmos is itself infinite. But it has no soul or reason; reason controls only the heavenly spheres, and only what is supracosmic enjoys the perfection that is incorruptible and impassible.

II. Development & Application

A. God, and specifically God the Son, created the κόσμος (Jn. 1:3,10; Acts 17:24).

1. The world had a beginning (Matt. 24:21; 25:34).
2. Before God founded the κόσμος He had planned the atonement for the sins of fallen mankind (Eph. 1:4; 1st Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8).

B. At the creation of the Adamic earth, the κόσμος was mostly, but not entirely good: at almost every stage of the creation God re-examined it and found it good (Gen. 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31; 2:1).

1. The heavens (שָׁמַיִם shamayim ^{#8064}).
2. The earth (אֶרֶץ erets ^{#776}).
3. The morally accountable inhabitants (angelic and human) constitute the κόσμος of the creation (Gen. 2:1).

¹ Theological dictionary of the New Testament / edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich

- C. Evil entered into the κόσμος through Lucifer's original sin.
1. The angelic fall preceded the human fall (Ezek. 28:12-18; Isa. 14:12-14; Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9).
 2. The angelic fall encompassed 1/3 of all angelic beings (Rev. 12:4).
 3. The result of the angelic fall was the entrance of evil into the κόσμος . This is the systematic structure of evil which Satan introduced, and which presently rules the entire κόσμος (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 1st Jn. 5:19).
 4. Evil stands opposed to good, and Satan's plan and program stand as alternatives to God's plan and program.
 5. Although Satan committed personal sin (Ezek. 28:16), his actions did not cause the manifestation of sin—as an estate—to enter into the κόσμος.
- D. Sin entered into the κόσμος through Adam's original sin (Rom. 5:12).
1. Sins (plural) are the personal sins that human beings, and fallen angels commit (Rom. 3:23).
 2. Sin (singular) is the estate of fallen humanity (Gal. 3:22). The sin of the κόσμος was taken away by the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29).
 3. Because angels are not a federal creation, as is humanity, there can be no “estate” of sin for the fallen angels.
 4. The effect of sin within the κόσμος is felt by the creation (κτίσις) (Rom. 8:21-23).
- E. Human beings are born in sin (Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:22; Job 15:14; Ps. 51:5; 58:3), and this is our estate when we enter into the κόσμος (John 16:21).
- F. Satan is the ruler of the κόσμος (John 12:31; 14:30).
1. The whole κόσμος lies within the sphere, or power of Satan (1st John 5:19).
 2. This present evil age, αἰών ^{#165} (Gal. 1:4), is characterized by the fact that Satan is the god of this age (2nd Cor. 4:4).
 - a. Satan is the counterfeit god the father (John 8:44).
 - b. Satan has sent many antichrists into the κόσμος as types of the one Antichrist yet to come (1st Jn. 2:18).
 - c. Satan has counterfeit spirits to contradict God the Holy Spirit in the promotion of Satan's lie (1st John 4:1-3). The sum total of Satan's unholy spirits is the Spirit of the κόσμος (1st Cor. 2:12).
 - d. The god of this age sends forth his evangelists (1st Tim. 4:1ff.).
 3. Satan's structure of evil operates along the organization of human kingdoms (Matt. 4:8-10; Dan. 10:13,20,21). (Or: Human kingdoms operate along the organization of Satan's structure of evil.)
 4. Satan's κόσμος system of evil is organized in rank structure (Eph. 6:12).
 - a. Rulers, ἀρχή ^{#746}: a rule, sovereignty.
 - b. Powers, ἐξουσία ^{#1849}: power, authority, freedom, right. Angelic beings are called “powers” in Eph. 3:10 (cp. 1:21); 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:15 (cp. 2:10).
 - c. Kosmos forces of Darkness, κοσμοκράτωρ ^{#2888} _{Ἡραπαξ}: contrast παντοκράτωρ ^{#3841}: almighty 2nd Cor. 6:18 & 9x in Rev.
 - d. Spiritual forces of Wickedness, πνευματικός ^{#4152}: spiritual beings (τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις)
 5. Satan's κόσμος system has three main elements which are designed for the downfall of humanity, and which consist of the Satanic provision in opposition to God the Father's provision (1st Jn. 2:16).
 - a. The lust of the flesh, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς.
 - 1) The flesh is the sin nature within each descendant of Adam (Rom. 7:18; 8:1-9).
 - 2) Satan's κόσμος system is engineered to make provision for the flesh in regards to its lust (Rom. 13:14).

- b. The lust of the eye, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν.
 - 1) Satan's κόσμος system entices the soul through the opportunities it presents for the eye to behold (Matt. 4:8; Gen. 3:6; 2nd Sam. 11:2; Matt 5:29).
 - 2) Satan's κόσμος system utilizes visual temptation to implant thoughts within the heart of man (Matt. 4:9; 6:19-24; 1st Cor. 2:9; John 13:2,27).
 - 3) Satan's κόσμος system is geared towards keeping the eyes of the person blinded, or off of the glory of God (2nd Cor. 4:4; 1st Jn. 2:11; Ps. 119:36,37; Heb. 12:2; Col. 3:1).
- c. The pride of life, ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου.
 - 1) Satan's κόσμος system is boastful and proud (Isa. 14:12-14; Gen. 3:5).
 - 2) Satan's κόσμος system is engineered to keep all the attention on βίος life, and away from ζωή life (John 6:53; Prov. 14:12; 16:25).
- G. God the Father so loved the κόσμος (John 3:16).
 - 1. God the Father's love is also God the Son's love (Eph. 5:25).
 - 2. Jesus came in love so that the κόσμος might be saved rather than judged (Jn. 3:17).
 - 3. Apart from the grace gift of salvation, Jesus can only offer judgment on this fallen world (Jn. 9:39) and on its prince Satan (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
- H. The Believer and the κόσμος.
 - 1. The temptation for friendship with the κόσμος must be resisted (Jam. 4:4).
 - 2. The κόσμος system holds religious humanity in such bondage, by insisting that law was designed to redeem them from their sins (Gal. 4:3,9-10; Col. 2:20).
 - 3. The κόσμος system also provides for the lustful side of humanity by promoting the absence of law through licentiousness (Jms. 4:1-4).
 - 4. The born-again believer is in the position of overcomer with respect to the κόσμος (1st Jn. 5:4-5).
 - 5. The born-again believer is the object of the κόσμος system's hatred, and as a result, will encounter tribulation in life (Jn. 15:18-19; 16:33).
 - 6. The born-again believer MUST understand and utilize the provision of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in his life, as his armor and weaponry against the κόσμος (1st Jn. 4:4).
 - 7. The born-again believer MUST understand and utilize the love of the Father throughout his life as his armor and weaponry against the love of the κόσμος (1st Jn. 2:15).
 - 8. The born-again believer has the responsibility to fulfill God the Father's work in this κόσμος .
 - a. He is to remain in the κόσμος and let his light shine (Mt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15).
 - b. He is not to become a part of the κόσμος (Jn. 17:15).
 - c. The κόσμος is his field of service (Mt. 13:38).
 - d. The gospel is to be preached to the whole κόσμος (Mk 14:9; 16:15).
- III. Summary & Conclusion: The end of the κόσμος (1st Jn. 2:17; 1st Cor. 7:29-31).
 - A. The κόσμος is passing away. παράγω ^{#3855}: to pass by.
 - 1. In 1st John 2:17 παράγεται is passive, indicating that it is being led away.
 - 2. In 1st Cor. 7:31 παράγει is active, indicating that the form of this κόσμος is passing away. σχῆμα ^{#4976}: a figure, fashion.
 - 3. In both passages παράγω is in the present tense, indicating that this activity is continuous action in present time.
 - 4. Along with the passing of this form of κόσμος, will pass the inherent lusts of the κόσμος (1st Jn. 2:17).
 - 5. All that will remain, will be the Godly desires, of doing the will of God the Father (1st Jn. 2:17).

- B. There will be a new κόσμος , although there is no specific declaration of a new κόσμος.
1. There will be new heavens (2nd Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).
 2. There will be a new earth (2nd Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).
 3. The κόσμος is included in the concept of “all things” (Rev. 21:5). The activities of death, mourning, crying, and pain are all elements of this present κόσμος (Rev. 21:4).
 4. The new κόσμος is seen (Isa. 60:15-22).